

IDENTIFICATION OF MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES AND STYLES USED BY FOOD  
PANTRY ADMINISTRATORS IN DELAWARE COUNTY, INDIANA  
TO ALLEVIATE FOOD INSECURITY

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## ABSTRACT

THESIS: Identification of Managerial Strategies and Styles Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County, Indiana to Alleviate Food Insecurity

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Adequate access to food of acceptable quantity and quality is necessary to provide energy and nutrients for growth, development, and daily living. However, many Americans do not have access to an adequate food supply and are considered “food insecure”. Despite the critical importance of food pantries in reducing food insecurity, few studies have evaluated the management strategies used by food pantry administrators. Identifying and addressing problems in managerial practices has the potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these establishments in their effort to help the food insecure. The purpose of this study was to identify the different leadership styles, food procurement practices, food distribution practices, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana. Seventeen food pantry administrators from Delaware County were recruited for the study. Each administrator completed a one on one interview with the principal investigator. Each interview session was approximately 30-60 minutes and was audio recorded. These recordings were then transcribed, and data analyzed using QRS Nvivo2. Transcripts were coded, and major themes were derived using phenomenological theory. The following themes emanated from the study 1) There are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, 2) There are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service

entities, 3) Food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients, 4) Food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs, and 5) Food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles. Findings from this study implied that identifying the food pantry administrators' perceived "best practices" in the management of the food pantry and sharing this information with other food pantry administrators, may increase the knowledge of the best management strategies and styles and potentially help reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adequate quantity and quality of food at all stages of the lifespan is essential for optimal physiological, cognitive, and emotional development and function (Cook & Frank, 2008). Many people, however, do not have access to an adequate food supply. This condition, known as “food insecurity”, is defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, & Rabbitt, 2017a). Food insecure individuals have limited choices in all aspects of their lives, often leaving them feeling powerless and without control (Callahan & Lumb, 1995).

Humans need nutritious food to obtain a healthy body and a healthy mind (Feeding America, 2017a). A lack of nutritious food and poor psychological health contributes to a higher risk for diet-related diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity (Feeding America, 2017a). Not having the appropriate resources to feed oneself or one’s family can contribute to poor psychological health, such as depression, stress, anxiety, and sadness (Davison & Kaplan, 2015). Being seen publicly as a food bank recipient often leads to negative emotions of feeling judged/degraded, dependent, guilty, isolated, and despondent, affecting one’s overall dignity (McIntyre, Officer & Robinson, 2003).

The prevalence of food insecurity is of great concern to policymakers and program administrators in the United States (Gundersen, 2014). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors the extent and severity of food insecurity in United States households annually through a nationally representative survey, placing households into the established categories of either high food security, marginal food security, low food security, or very low food security (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, Rabbitt & Singh 2017). In 2017, an estimated 11.8 percent -- or 15 million United States households -- were food insecure (Coleman-Jensen, Rabbitt, Gregory & Singh, 2018). Delaware County, Indiana, has the third highest rate of food insecurity in Indiana, where, in 2016, an estimated 16.9% (19,690 people) were food insecure (Gunderson, Dewey, Crumbaugh, Kato, Engelhard, Odeen, Kriss, & Ratulangi, 2018).

The incidence of food insecurity varies considerably among households with different demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). In 2017, an estimated 36.8% of households with annual incomes below the poverty line were food insecure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Among all food-insecure households in 2017, 30.3 percent were female-headed households with children, 19.7 percent were male-headed households with children, and a disproportionately higher percentage were in minority households and in households located in rural areas (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Low levels of education (e.g., having some college experience yet no degree, having only a high school diploma, or having less than a high school diploma), led to lower weekly earnings and lower employment rates, placing individuals and families at risk for food insecurity (United States Department of Labor, 2017).

To help alleviate food insecurity, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides a wide array of food and nutrition assistance programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Commodity Supplemental Foods, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016). Many communities supplement these federal programs with food banks and local food pantries (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). Food banks are warehouses for food and other products that are distributed to the community; in contrast, food pantries provide food directly to those in need (Feeding America, 2017b). In Delaware County, Indiana, Second Harvest Food Bank is the primary food bank. The county has approximately 20 food pantries that help reduce food insecurity, hunger, and poverty in the county (Muncie Neighborhoods, 2017). A selection of the pantries in Muncie are choice pantries that offer a more dignified experience and help secure people's pride by providing the opportunity to distribute a variety of food in a grocery store-like atmosphere where people can walk through aisles and choose food based on needs, preferences, and cultural appropriateness (Remley, Kaiser, & Osso, 2013).

Despite the critical importance of food pantries in reducing food insecurity, few studies have evaluated the management strategies used by pantry administrators. To combat food insecurity while fostering self-worth among participants, food pantry managers should implement effective management strategies. Good management strategies are important, as the way organizations are running impacts the way food is purchased, prepared, and distributed. (Jones, 2003; Beaman & Johnson, 2006; Shaffie & Azman, 2015). To that end, it is critical to identify the management strategies used by food pantries.

## **Problem**

In 2017, fifteen million households in the United States were food insecure and were unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Specifically, in Delaware County, Indiana, in 2016, an estimated 16.9% of the population was food insecure, acquiring the third highest food insecurity rate (Gunderson et al., 2018). Food insecure individuals have limited choices in all aspects of their lives, leading to negative emotions of feeling judged, dependent, guilty, isolated, and despondent, which could affect one's overall dignity (Callahan & Lumb, 1995; McIntyre et al., 2003). Poor psychological health issues can develop due to a lack of appropriate resources needed to feed oneself. (Davison & Kaplan, 2015). Despite the critical importance of food pantries in reducing food insecurity, few studies have evaluated the management strategies and styles used by food pantry administrators, while concomitantly providing the food in a way that meets the disparate needs of food insecure families who frequent the agency. The way food is purchased, prepared, and distributed impacts upon human health, the environment, and society at large. Therefore, by developing good management skills, one has the opportunity to continue seeing success for their company, their team members, and everyone else involved. Thus, identifying effective management strategies used by food pantry administrators in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity in the county is warranted.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. How do food pantry administrators define their role as a leader?
2. What principles guide agency organization across food pantries?
3. How do food pantries see themselves as contributing to nutritional well-being?
4. How do food pantry leaders define the future of their organization?
5. What principles guide the food procurement and distribution practices across all food pantries?

## **Rationale**

Food insecurity is one of the nation's leading health and nutrition issues (Gunderson & Ziliak, 2015). Adequate quantity and quality of food at all stages of one's lifespan is essential for optimal physiological, cognitive, and emotional development and function (Cook & Frank, 2008). Households with limited resources employ a variety of methods to help meet their food needs; some participate in one or more of the Federal food and nutrition assistance programs or obtain food from emergency food providers in their communities to supplement the food they purchase (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). An expansive network constitutes the emergency feeding organizations, and of these organizations, food pantries are included. Interviewing pantry administrators about their best practices and sharing the detailed information with other food pantry administrators, can increase the knowledge of food banks, community members, and other pantries and potentially help reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county.

## **Assumptions**

The researcher made the following assumptions in the implementation of the study and in the interpretation of the data:

1. The study participants understood the questions being asked.
2. The study participants answered the questions honestly.
3. The questions asked adequately addressed all potential areas that impact the management of food pantries in Delaware County.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. Food Insecurity: the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017a).
2. Low-Income: a description of low wage earnings, less than or equal to 50 percent of median family income (United States Department of Housing and Urban Planning, 2012).
3. Food Bank: can refer to one of two types of service: a large redistributor of rescued food to smaller charities that provide cooked and/or uncooked food to food insecure populations, or a service that provides grocery items directly to clients (Kicinski, 2012; Campbell et al., 2013.)
4. Food Pantry: distribution centers that provide groceries and other basic necessities and are an important component because they offer community-based assistance to needy, low-income households and individuals (Mabli & Worthington, 2017).

5. Food Distribution: the process of how the population is served food.
6. Managerial Strategies: a collection of ongoing activities of strategic analysis, strategy creation, implementation, and monitoring. It systematically organizes the resources in alignment with the vision, mission, and strategy of the organization within the internal and external environment (Athapaththu, 2016).
7. Food Procurement: food purchases.
8. Resources: a supply of assets (money, materials, food).

## **Summary**

Food insecurity, prevalent in the United States, is determined by varying factors such as income, marital status, gender, race, education, and geographic location. Food insecurity leads to an overwhelming array of physical, psychological, and health deficits, which affects one's overall wellness. To combat this problem, individuals at risk for food insecurity often engage in resources to help meet their food needs; the resources consist of nutrition assistance programs, food banks, and food pantries. Identifying managerial practices used by food pantry administrators, and then sharing that information with key stakeholders, will not only add to the current knowledge base but will potentially help other food banks and local pantries optimize their services as they aim to reduce food insecurity in their community.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. This chapter will present a review of literature that: 1) Defines food insecurity, determines the measurement of food insecurity and describes the prevalence of food insecurity in the United States; 2) Identifies the determinants associated with the occurrence of food insecurity; 3) Explains the physiological, physical, and dietary effects attributed to food insecurity; 4) Specifies a variety of methods to help alleviate food insecurity; and 5) Explores management practices in food pantries.

#### **Food Insecurity in the United States**

Adequate quantity and quality of food at all stages of a lifespan is imperative, as access to food is essential for optimal physiological, cognitive, and emotional development and function (Cook & Frank, 2008). Many people, however, do not have access to an adequate food supply – a condition known as “food insecurity”. Food insecurity, one of the nation's leading health and nutrition issues (Gunderson & Ziliak, 2015), is defined as the limited or uncertain availability of

nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017a).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors the extent and severity of food insecurity in United States households annually through a nationally representative survey sponsored and analyzed by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). Data for the ERS food security reports come from an annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). Food security is measured using eighteen questions for households with children; a subset of ten of these eighteen questions is used for households without children (Gundersen, Kreider, & Pepper, 2011). The USDA uses the results of these questions to categorize households into the following four food categories based on the number of affirmative responses: 1) high food security, in which there are no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations; 2) marginal food security, in which there are one or two reported indications, typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house; 3) low food security, in which there are reports of reduced quality, variability, or desirability of diet; and 4) very low food security, in which there are multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, & Rabbitt, 2017b). The categories of low food security and very low food security are often combined into the category of "food insecurity", and a household is placed under the category of "food insecurity" if three or more questions are affirmatively answered (Gundersen et al., 2011).

The prevalence of food insecurity is of great concern to policymakers and program administrators (Gundersen, 2014). According to the USDA 2017 Economic Research Report, 11.8 percent -- or 15 million United States households -- were food insecure in 2017, meaning

they were at times unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members because they had insufficient money and lack of resources for food (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Out of the accounted food-insecure households, 40 million people -- or 12.5 percent of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population -- lived in food insecure households, this included 27.5 million adults and 12.5 million children (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Delaware County, Indiana, has the third highest rate of food insecurity in Indiana where, in 2016, an estimated 16.9% (19,690 people) were food insecure (Gunderson et al., 2018).

### **Determinants of Food Insecurity**

The prevalence of food insecurity varies considerably among households with different demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics; determinants of food insecurity include income, marital status, gender, race, education and geographic location (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). All of these causes of food insecurity -- income, marital status, gender, race, education, and geographic location -- are complex and interrelated. Each of these variables will be briefly discussed.

#### **Income**

Food insecurity is strongly associated with income; in 2017, 36.8 percent of households with annual incomes below the official poverty line were food insecure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). The capacity of households to obtain the food they require depends on the level of household incomes relative to the price of food (Warr, 2014). When income is constrained or limited, households may be forced to make difficult decisions that can result in a less-than-adequate supply of food (Wight, Kaushal, Waldfogel, & Garfinkel, 2014).

### Household Structure

In 2017, 30.3 percent of all food-insecure households were female-headed households with children, while, 19.7 percent were male-headed households with children (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Being a single parent increases the odds of experiencing food insecurity (Carter, Dubois, Tremblay, & Taljaard, 2012). Married-couple families with children accounted for only 9.5 percent of food insecure households. An estimated 60 percent of all food-insecure households were adult-only households with no children (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Married-couple households have a greater likelihood of higher household income levels due to the possibility of combining the two individual incomes. While, single parents only have one source of income, facing a greater risk of food insecurity.

### Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are risk factors that can predict food insecurity, with the rate of food insecurity disproportionately higher in minority households (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). In 2017, 8.8 percent of white, non-Hispanic households were found to be food insecure, while 21.8 percent of black, non-Hispanic, 18.0 percent of Hispanic, and 9.9 percent of others who are non-Hispanic were food insecure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). When racial and ethnic minority populations lack access to adequate and healthy food, they obtain less economic opportunities (Elsheikh & Barhoum, 2013).

### Location

Household location (i.e., rural, suburban, metropolitan) also can be used to predict the prevalence of food insecurity. In 2017, 13.3 percent of food-insecure households were located in nonmetropolitan (rural) areas and 13.8 percent of food-insecure households were located in principal cities of metropolitan areas. In suburbs or “exurbs” and other metropolitan areas

outside principal cities, a much smaller percentage (9.4) of households were food insecure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018). Regionally, the prevalence of food insecurity was highest in the South and significantly lower in the Northeast than in the Midwest or the West. (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2018).

### Education

The level of education is one of the key determinants of food insecurity. Access to employment opportunities requires academic achievement (Elsheikh & Barhoum, 2013). According to the United States Department of Labor and National Center for Education Statistics (2018), weekly earnings and employment rates are likely to decrease in individuals with lower levels of educational attainments (i.e., having some college experience yet no degree, having only a high school diploma, or having less than a high school diploma) when compared to individuals with higher levels of educational attainment (i.e., a Doctoral degree, Professional degree, Master's degree, Bachelor's degree, or Associate's Degree). Each level of education completed helps develop more skills employers value, such as being able to follow through on important tasks such as planning ahead and meeting deadlines, resulting in access to higher paying occupations (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

### **Effects of Food Insecurity**

Individuals experiencing food insecurity often have several compounding factors that make it difficult to maintain good health. The compounding factors resulting in food insecurity range from physical effects, psychological effects, and dietary effects.

### Physical Effects of Food Insecurity

Humans need nutritious food to obtain a healthy body and a healthy mind (Feeding America, 2017a). However, not being able to have enough food, or having to purchase less nutritious options due to income, can lead to health implications. Food insecure individuals are at a higher risk for diet-related diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity (Seligman, Bindman, Vittinghoff, Kanaya, and Kushel, 2017).

Seligman et al. (2017) conducted a two-year cross-sectional analysis of the nationally representative, population-based National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to determine the relationship between food security classification and disease risk. Subjects included 4,423 adults 20 years of age and older with household incomes less than or equal to 300% of the federal poverty level. Subjects were categorized into three groups: food secure, mild food insecurity, and severe food insecurity. Results indicated that 10.0% (n=134) of those in the mild food insecurity category had diabetes, and 16.1 % (n=47) of those in the severe food insecurity category had diabetes. Concluding that participants with severe food insecurity were more likely to have diabetes than those without food insecurity.

Pan, Sherry, Njai, and Blanck (2012) redesigned a food insecurity question that measured food stress and included it in the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in the Social Context optional module. The objective of the study was to examine the association between food stress and obesity using the added question as a surrogate for food insecurity. The study's sample included 66,553 adults from 12 states. *T*-tests were used to compare the differences in the prevalence of obesity and food insecurity between groups. Results of the study indicated that among the 12 states, the prevalence of food insecurity was 19.0% overall, 22.5% among underweight, 16.4% among normal weight, 17.2% among overweight, and 24.7% among obese

adults. One in three food insecure adults were obese, with the prevalence of obesity significantly higher among food-insecure adults than that among food secure adults (35.1% vs 25.2%;  $P<0.0001$ ).

Wang et al (2015) used data from the 2002-2008 Veterans Aging Cohort Study (VACS) and determined the prevalence of food insecurity among veterans who have accessed health care in the Veterans Health Administration (VA). The researchers analyzed baseline data on 6,709 subjects enrolled in VACS. To capture the broadest domain of food insecurity, VACS incorporated the first question of the 18-item Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) in the baseline patient survey. Additionally, researchers examined the association between food insecurity and various clinical conditions, including hypertension, diabetes, HIV, and depression. Subjects with and without food insecurity were first compared on baseline sociodemographic and clinical characteristics, they evaluated those characteristics associated with food insecurity using t-tests and chi-square tests. Next, they examined factors associated with food insecurity using multivariable logistic regression. Finally, researchers examined the prevalence of food insecurity by the severity of hypertension, diabetes, HIV, and depression using chi-square tests. They considered  $p<0.05$  to be statistically significant. Results indicated that among 6,709 subjects, 1,624 (24%) reported food insecurity, and individuals who were food insecure had a higher risk of having high blood pressure than those who were food secure ( $p < 0.013$ ).

### Psychological Effects of Food Insecurity

The consequences of food insecurity go beyond physical health outcomes and can affect mental well-being. Corresponding nutrient deficiencies due to food insecurity, may, in turn, lead to the development of depression (Ramsey, Giskes, Turrell, & Gallegos, 2011). Davison and Kaplan (2015) analyzed data from a study of adults randomly selected from the membership list

of the Mood Disorder Association of British Columbia (n=97), Canada. Food insecurity status was based on validated screening questions; psychological, social, and occupational functioning was based on scores of the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale, Hamilton Depression Scale, and Young Mania Rating Scale; and nutrient intakes were derived from 3-day food records. Mann–Whitney U tests, and Poisson regression were the two binomial tests used to examine the results. Results reported an association between food insecurity and psychological functioning, with higher depression scores more prevalent among participants who reported being low income ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, the sample of adults with mood disorders had a higher proportion of individuals (36%) experiencing food insecurity ( $p < 0.001$ ) compared to the general population.

McLaughlin et al. (2012) drew data from 6,483 adolescent-parent pairs who participated in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement, a national survey of adolescents 13 to 17 years old. Frequency and severity of food insecurity were assessed with questions based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Security Scale. *DSM-IV* mental disorders were grouped into either, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, behavior disorders, and substance disorders, and were assessed with the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview. Results found a higher food insecurity score was associated with greater odds of any past-year mental disorder and greater odds of past-year mood, anxiety, behavior, and substance disorders. A one standard deviation increase in food insecurity was associated with a 14% greater odds of past-year mental disorder in adolescents.

There are many interconnected ways in which food insecurity could contribute to poor nutritional and psychological health, including through the body’s physiological response to the immense stress from not having the resources to feed oneself and/or one’s family (Davison et al., 2015). In addition, when people experience food insecurity, they may be forced to consume food



in socially unacceptable ways, which may affect psychological function directly or indirectly by altering nutrient intakes and metabolism (Davison et al., 2015).

Food insecure individuals have limited choices in all aspects of their lives, which then may leave them feeling powerless and without control (Callahan & Lumb, 1995). Being seen publicly as a food bank recipient leads to negative emotions of feeling judged/degraded, dependent, guilty, isolated, and despondent, affecting one's overall dignity (McIntyre et al., 2003). McIntyre et al. (2003) studied a subgroup of 24 low-income single mothers who were purposively recruited from the overall study sample to participate in ethnographic face-to-face interviews. When presenting themselves to charitable agencies, some of the mothers indicated they would dress up their children so that it looked like it was the first time they went to the food bank. One woman indicated she covered up the food bank bags with bags from a reputable grocery chain so that she would not be seen publicly as a food bank recipient. One mother recalled the following: "[I'll] never forget the first time; I froze. We had to line up outside. It was unbelievable; it was a nightmare." Another said, "I was so embarrassed, I just wanted to become invisible and couldn't believe I was doing it" (McIntyre et al., 2003).

#### Dietary Effects of Food Insecurity

Food is of fundamental, biological, and social importance; in biological terms, humans require approximately 2,000 kilocalories per day to fuel activities (Weaver, 2014). Not having access to enough food for an active, healthy life because of a lack of resources, is a continuing problem in the United States.

Leibtag & Kaufman (2003) compared food purchases by U.S. households of different income levels to better understand the economizing practices of the poor. The Economic Research Service (ERS) in 1997 reviewed the results of studies comparing price differences in

grocery stores across different income levels and combined these with current census data on the distribution of low-income households by urbanization type. The researchers further investigated possible food spending differences across income levels, through the examination of food store purchase data. Low-income households have been found to purchase more discounted items and store brand products, take greater advantage of volume discounts and purchase less expensive versions of a given product compared with higher-income households.

The Food Stamp Program provides benefits that low-income households can use to purchase food in grocery stores. Research shows that the program is successful in increasing the amount of food purchased and eaten by program participants. Researchers turned to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey (CEX) and its data on household spending, to fully link income to total household food purchases. Among the lowest-income households, the largest food expenditure at grocery stores is for frozen prepared meals, canned and packaged prepared foods, snack foods, condiments and seasonings, sugar and other sweets, fats and oils, and nonalcoholic beverages (Frazao, Andrews, Smallwood, & Prell, 2007).

Few Americans, in general, meet dietary recommendations for total fruits, whole fruits, total vegetables, dark green vegetables, orange vegetables, dry beans and peas, starchy vegetables, whole grains, and milk. To examine the impact of income on adherence to food-based dietary guidance, Kirkpatrick, Dodd, Reedy, and Krebs-Smith (2012) analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, a cross-sectional, nationally representative survey, for 2001-2004. Dietary intake data was collected by interviewer-administered 24-hour recalls (24HR) conducted using the Automated Multiple Pass Method, and results were converted into food groups (total fruits, whole fruits, total vegetables, dark green vegetables, orange vegetables, dry beans and peas, starchy vegetables, other vegetables, total

grains, whole grains, meat and beans, milk, and oils). Of the available dietary intake, results indicated that food groups that are most problematic among middle and low-income groups include whole fruits, total vegetables, and some vegetable subgroups, whole grains, and milk. Hanson and Connor (2015) systematically reviewed all evidence of associations between food insecurity and dietary quality through Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Dietary Reference Intakes. In adults, 170 associations between food insecurity and dietary quality were tested. There was considerable evidence that food-insecure adults ate fewer vegetables, fruit, and dairy products and had a lower intake of vitamins A and B-6, calcium, magnesium, and zinc.

### **Alleviating Food Insecurity**

Households with limited resources employ a variety of methods to help meet their food needs; some participate in one or more of the Federal food and nutrition assistance programs or obtain food from emergency food providers in their communities to supplement the food they purchase (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017).

#### **Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) manages a wide array of food and nutrition assistance programs (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016). The selection of programs and services can be categorized into either food distribution programs, child nutrition programs, or individual assistance programs.

#### ***Food Distribution Programs***

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food distribution programs strengthen the Nation's nutrition safety net by providing food and nutrition assistance to a variety of groups through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Food Distribution

Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) (USDA, 2016). The mission of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program is to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. The purpose of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations is to provide commodity foods to low-income households, including the elderly, living on Indian reservations, and to Native American families residing in designated areas near reservations. Under The Emergency Food Assistance Program, states provide commodity food to local agencies that they have selected, usually food banks, which in turn, distribute the food to soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public (USDA, 2016).

The Emergency Food Assistance Program is the primary government program impacting the work of the food pantries. They are a means-tested federal program that provides food commodities at no cost to Americans in need of short-term hunger relief (Feeding America, 2018). USDA buys the food, including processing and packaging, and ships it to the States (USDA, 2015). The types of foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on the preferences of States and on agricultural market conditions, as nearly 90 nutritious, high-quality products are available (USDA, 2017). Then, through TEFAP, local organizations, such as food pantries, are able to distribute the USDA Foods to eligible recipients for household consumption or use them to prepare and serve meals in a congregate setting (USDA, 2017). USDA also provides states with funding to assist with a small amount of storage and distribution costs for TEFAP commodities (Feeding America, 2018).

### *Child Nutrition Programs*

The Food and Nutrition Service administers several programs that provide healthy food to children including, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable

Program (FFVP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The Child and Adult Care Food Program provide nutritious meals and snacks to children in daycare, and meals and snacks to adults who receive care in nonresidential adult day care centers (USDA, 2016). The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provide free fresh fruits and vegetables in selected low-income elementary schools nationwide, and the National School Lunch Program provides independent schools and school districts with cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each meal they serve. Also, school districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the School Breakfast Program receive cash subsidies from the USDA for each meal they serve. Participating schools and institutions participating in the Special Milk Program receive reimbursement from the USDA for each half pint of milk served. The Summer Food Service Program is available for local sponsors who want to combine a feeding program with a summer activity program (USDA, 2016).

#### *Individual Assistance Programs*

The two largest food assistance programs administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service are The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (USDA, 2016). The Supplemental Nutrition Program puts healthy food within reach of people each month via an EBT card used to purchase food at most grocery stores. The Women, Infants, and Children Program serve to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, & children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care. Coordinated through The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, The WIC Farmers' Market

Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables from local farmers' markets to WIC recipients. Finally, there is The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which award grants to States, United States territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs (USDA, 2016).

### Food Distribution Systems

Food bank programs are at the center of emergency food aid efforts (Bazerghi, Mckay, & Dunn, 2016). The term 'food bank' can refer to one of two types of service: a large redistributor of rescued food to smaller charities that provide cooked and/or uncooked food to food insecure populations, or a service that provides grocery items directly to clients (Kicinski, 2012; Campbell et al., 2013). Food banks in the United States are diverse, ranging from small operations serving people spread out across large rural areas to very large facilities that store and distribute many millions of pounds of food each year, and everything in between (Feeding America, 2017b).

The largest domestic hunger-relief organization, Feeding America, is leading the fight against hunger in the United States. Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs that provides food and services to people each year (Feeding America, 2017b). Two members of Feeding America identified in Indiana, include Second Harvest food bank and Gleaners. Second Harvest food bank of East Central Indiana is devoted to feeding the hungry, advocating for those with food insecurity and providing nutrition education; their mission is to provide help for today by feeding the hungry and hope for tomorrow by addressing the causes of food insecurity while empowering people toward self-

sufficiency (Second Harvest, n.d.). Gleaner's food bank mission is to lead the fight against hunger in central and southeast Indiana by collecting, storing, and distributing food to those in need (Gleaners, 2017). Food banks are warehouses for food and other products that are distributed to the community; in contrast, food pantries provide food directly to those in need (Feeding America, 2017b).

### Food Pantries

Food pantries are one strategy to meet emergency food needs and address food security in local communities (Shanks, 2017). Food pantries are distribution centers that provide groceries and other basic necessities and are an important component because they offer community-based assistance to needy, low-income households and individuals (Mabli & Worthington, 2017). Typically, food banks receive donated food or purchase foods at a reduced cost from entities such as community members, local organizations, food retailers, food manufacturers, food producers, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, then, food banks store or distribute food to food pantries from a central food banks' warehouse (Shanks, 2017). The distribution of food occurs at community centers, neighborhood sites, and mostly local churches. Due to the high prevalence of food insecurity in Delaware County, Indiana, there are currently approximately 23 food assistance pantries available to help in the alleviation of food insecurity (Muncie Neighborhoods, 2017). Helping secure people's pride, choice pantries provide the opportunity to distribute a variety of food in a grocery store-like atmosphere where people can walk through aisles and choose food based on needs, preferences, and cultural appropriateness (Remley et al., 2013).

Lauren Schwab (2013) examined the choice pantry model from the provider's perspective. Choice food pantries differ from traditional pantries in that choice pantries allow

families to choose food items off the shelves with the help of a volunteer instead of receiving a prepackaged bag. Clients shop using a selection card that allows a certain number of choices based on the number of family members. In a traditional food pantry, pre-packed food tends to create more waste because the client may have not tried certain items, not recognize items, or not know how to prepare these items because they have not been introduced to it. In a choice pantry, pantry workers encourage and suggest clients to try new foods and recipes, which eliminates the uncertainty factor. This education, encouragement, and suggestion promote the value and role choice pantries play in a client's ability to secure and serve a variety of nutritional foods to their household. When clients shop for themselves it gives them more choice, freedom, and overall dignity as they can choose what they want. They may already have an item at home that they are out of and need more of it, or they may have dietary issues such as diabetes, and need foods with no sugar added or low in sodium (Schwab, 2013).

A study by Duffy and colleagues (2006) sought to identify demographic and attitudinal differences between pantry directors and "food-needy persons" in a two-state region of the South (Alabama-Mississippi). They investigated the attribution of poverty, and comparisons of social welfare providers' and recipients' attitudes about poverty, by examining how pantry directors and food-needy persons viewed the causes of poverty, the effects of social welfare programs, and the character of those who utilized food assistance programs. Differences in race, education, and religion emerged when directors and the populations they served were compared. Specifically, food pantry directors were more likely than the food-needy population to be white and well educated. Also, directors reported having a much stronger church involvement. Furthermore, when identifying the attitudes toward welfare programs, the food-needy population had a harsher attitude toward welfare than the pantry directors. The food-needy population was more likely to



agree that welfare reduces work effort. Additionally, a majority of the directors reported the reasoning for pantry use was physical illness/disability or low wages. Overall, the combination of sympathy and suspicion that was evidenced by the directors toward their clients, may have been a product of the wide range of experiences that pantry directors had with the populations they served. Directors were likely to serve various populations, and their closeness to those they served might have led them to develop different views of “the poor” (Duffy, Irimia-Vladu, Cashwell, Bartkowski, Molnar & Casanova, 2006).

### **Management Styles in Non-Profit Organizations**

Nonprofit organizations became increasingly important in the late twentieth century, in the United States, because governments were gradually outsourcing various tasks to them (Salamon & Anheier, 1996). A nonprofit organization is a tax-exempt organization that serves the public interest, and they do not declare a profit (Nonprofit and fundraising resources, n.d.). Instead, nonprofit organizations depend on a diverse set of funding to sustain their operations. These general funding sources include government grants/contracts, the fee for service, as well as donations and foundation grants within and outside of an agency’s service area (Besel, Williams, & Klak, 2011). It is critical that nonprofit managers understand the cultures of their organization, as their beliefs, values, and assumptions form the core of the organization from the start and are taught to new members (Schein, 1985). Leaders can transmit and embed organizational culture through deliberate teaching, coaching, role modeling, reward allocation, recruitment, selection, promotion, and other mechanisms (Jaskyte, 2004). Also, it is in the interest of the nonprofit organization and its leadership to facilitate a dialogue with key

stakeholders to surface and overtly identify the various performance criteria, outcome measures, and other constructions of effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 1998).

Leadership is critical to the survival of nonprofit organizations, and it is important that nonprofit managers know how to shape and influence their work environment (Jaskyte, 2004). Leadership practices of a nonprofit organization, include inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and challenging the process (Jaskyte, 2004). A small number of studies have distinguished between leaders who behave democratically and allow subordinates to participate in decision making, and those who behave autocratically and discourage the subordinates from participating in decision-making. This dimension of leadership is ordinarily termed democratic versus autocratic leadership, or participative versus directive leadership (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). However, the leadership styles of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire are the most widely discussed. Transactional leadership involves managing in the more conventional sense of clarifying subordinate responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives (Burns, 1978). Laissez-faire is marked by a general failure to take responsibility for managing, exhibiting frequent absence and lack of involvement during critical junctures (Burns, 1978). Additionally, transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders (Transformational Leadership, n.d.). Transformational leadership is important to consider in a volunteer context because monetary rewards are absent (Snyder & Omoto, 2004). Transformational leadership is associated with volunteers viewing their activities as more meaningful and having more positive relationships with other volunteers (Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov, & Berson, 2013). Volunteers are more satisfied with their service when team leaders are

inspirational, show concern about their development, involve them in decisions, and focus on the meaning of the work (Dwyer et al., 2013).

### **Management Strategies in Food Establishments**

Food is a powerful tool in society. The way food is purchased, prepared, and distributed impacts upon human health, the environment, and society at large. Initially, good food procurement strategies can save a company a significant amount of money by buying commodities at reduced prices, improving the timing of purchases, or improving logistics between the manufacturer and its supplier (Jones, 2003). Also, the conventional distribution path for a packaged food product can vary greatly, and efficiency is key in moving these products through the food distribution channel, not only for cost reasons but also for perishability and damage control reasons (Beaman & Johnson, 2006). Not to mention, public relations is vital as it can improve the reputation of a business, lead to strong community partners, and build relationships (APS, 2018). Furthermore, a food handler's knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding special dietary needs are important to prevent debilitating reactions and obtain customers trust (Shaffie & Azman, 2015). By developing good management skills, one has the opportunity to continue seeing success for their company, their team members, and everyone else involved.

### **Management Strategies in Food Pantries**

A food pantry is a private emergency food provider that gives bags or boxes of unprepared groceries to clients in varying amounts; the pantry may distribute bags on a monthly or weekly basis or be open certain hours to allow clients to “shop” from the pantry shelves

(Berner, Ozer, & Paynter, 2008). Typical food pantries are staffed mostly by volunteers, largely funded by local donations, and associated with faith-based organizations (Long, Rowland, Steelman, & McElfish, 2017).

Janet Poppendieck (1998) went behind the scenes of America's hunger relief programs to assess the effectiveness of efforts and to track the shift away from entitlements on the nation's response to poverty and hunger. Emergency food is becoming a way of life, as it has found a niche in society. Emergency food programs have clearly filled significant gaps in the array of assistance available to people in need and have brought a measure of kindness and flexibility to the whole national project of helping poor people. However, Poppendieck indicated that food pantry administrators cannot just keep putting "band-aids" on the growing emphasis of emergency food for the hungry, distracting from the fundamental goal of solving poverty. Band-aids is a term used to signify the limitations of emergency foods. People who want an inclusive society, one without a marginalized layer at the bottom, should be thinking about ways to provide assistance that unite and integrate rather than separating and segregating poor people. Emergency food assistance organizations should begin transforming themselves from charitable programs to cooperative endeavors where this integrative process can begin, and people can rediscover how much they have in common (Poppendieck, 1998). Currently, research on managerial practices within food pantries, especially as it relates to alleviating food insecurity, is very limited. However, identifying the different managerial styles and strategies within the food pantries in Delaware County and then sharing the results, would hopefully contribute to solving the very problem that pantry administrators are working so hard to solve--poverty. Noted below are a few studies that evaluated the nutrition procedures and use bricolage to adopt a set of bureaucratic practices used by food pantry operators.

### Nutrition Quality of Food Provided from Food Pantries

Studies on nutrition quality of food provided from food pantries showed that dairy products were one of the food groups most often provided in inadequate amounts (O'Reilly, O'Shea, & Bhusumane, 2012; Irwin, Ng, Rush, Nguyen, & He, 2007; Starkey, 1994; Jessri, Abedi, Wong, & Eslamian, 2014). A few studies reported that the servings provided for fruits and vegetables were adequate (Willows & Au, 2006; Starkey, 1994; Jessri et al, 2014). Minimal studies indicated that the supply of meat and alternatives exceeded recommendations (Willows et al, 2006; Jessri et al, 2014), others reported insufficient meat and alternatives (O'Reilly et al, 2012; Irwin et al, 2007) and another confirmed adequate supply of meat and alternatives (Starkey, 1994). Lastly, when comparing the recommendations, studies reported adequate provision of grain products (O'Reilly et al, 2012; Irwin et al, 2007; Willows et al, 2006; Starkey, 1994; Jessri et al, 2014).

A review by Simmet et al (2017) on the nutritional content of non-perishable foods distributed in food pantries found that the amounts of vitamins A and C provided by six pantries were, on average, below or borderline above Recommended Dietary Allowance values with large variations. Folate, niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, and vitamins B-12 and D were, on average, provided in adequate amounts. Also, the mean supply of calcium, iron, and zinc was reported to be inadequate in some of the studies. The results from this systematic review indicated that most food pantries were unable to distribute perishable foods that would have a great impact on malnutrition in food insecure individuals (Simmet, Depa, Tinnemann, & Stroebele-Benschop, 2017).

### Use of Bricolage Amongst Food Pantry Directors

A qualitative study by Precious, Baker, and Edwards (2017) studied three food banks and twelve food pantries in Oregon, which covered a wide variety of types ranging from professional multi-service agencies to very small church-based volunteer programs. The three counties selected in Oregon consisted of diverse geographical areas including the Oregon coast, rural mountain communities, and urban conurbations. To study the impact of institutional norms on roles in shaping discretionary behavior, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the employees of the state food bank, two regional food banks within Oregon and the directors of each pantry selected. Pantry directors were observed to use bricolage to adopt a set of bureaucratic practices, to help them to fulfill their desired roles. Bricolage is when individuals seek to create new logics of appropriateness and standard operating procedures by combining old logics into new forms. When stressors in the pantry arose, such as lack of resources, overly restrictive rules, or a sense that some clients were more deserving, a sense of order was re-established. To ensure that food was distributed to the deserving, various strategies were used such as address verification, information sharing and the enforcement of the “once-a-month” rule. Overall, there appeared to be no pattern to which the size, location, or style of pantry affected the practice of bricolage. The final decision-making of the food pantry managers reflected a process in which they sought to settle the conflict between the professional identity they must assume and the normative pressures that encouraged them to become involved in the emergency food network. (Precious, Baker & Edwards, 2017).

While some studies have evaluated the nutrition procedures and use bricolage adopted by food pantry operators, understanding the managerial practices of the food pantries is still lacking.

This information is critical for food pantry administrators, to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in alleviating food insecurity.

## **Summary**

Food insecurity is a widespread problem, affecting many individuals in the United States, and is determined by varying factors such as income, marital status, gender, race, education, and geographic location. The prevalence of food insecurity is of great concern, especially in Delaware County, where it had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate in the state of Indiana (Gunderson et al., 2018). Food insecurity leads to an overwhelming array of physical, psychological, and health deficits, which affects one's overall wellness. To help in the fight against food insecurity, federal food and nutrition assistance programs, and emergency food providers are available. However, further research is needed to fully understand the managerial practices within food pantries. Good management practices are important in seeing success in a company, as the way organizations are running, and the way food is purchased, prepared, and distributed are impactful concepts in the community. Interviewing pantry administrators one-on-one may be successful in increasing the current knowledge base of community members and increasing optimization of food banks and local pantries services, as they aim to reduce food insecurity in their community.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. This chapter will describe the methods used to conduct the study.

#### **Institutional Review Board**

Permission to carry out the study was requested from Ball State University Institutional Review Board. The study was approved by Ball State University IRB on February 25, 2018, as exempt (Appendix A-1). The researcher who conducted this analysis completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative training (Appendix A-2).

#### **Subjects**

The population of this study included a convenience sample of local pantry administrators present in Delaware County, Indiana. The county has 23 food pantries that help reduce food insecurity, hunger, and poverty. A pantry administrator from each of the 23 food pantries was identified and contacted, serving as subjects for this study. Of the 23 food pantries



that were contacted, 16 agreed to participate in the interview. Of the seven that did not participate, three responded that they did not wish to participate in the interview, and after various follow-ups, the researcher did not hear back from the other four.

## **Instruments**

A semi-structured interview was administered to the food pantry administrator by the investigator. The dates and times of the interviews were chosen in correspondence to the food pantry administrators' availability. Each interview was 25-60 minutes and was audio recorded using a Sony recorder. The interviews started on Wednesday, April 4 and ended on Wednesday, May 9.

### *Interview Questions*

The list of interview questions (Appendix B-2) was adapted and modified from *Improving the Nutritional Quality of Emergency Food: A Study of Food Bank Organizational Culture, Capacity, and Practices* (Campbell, Ross, & Webb, 2013). The researcher conducted their own face validity of the interview questions, through three researchers at Ball State University and through a scheduled practice interview with a food pantry in Indianapolis.

Primary data collection methods included phenomenological semi-structured interviews with the selected pantry administrators. The researcher sought to document information from each food pantry relating to their leadership styles, public relations campaigns, capacity, nutrition-related culture, and practices relating to special diets, food procurement, and food distribution. The interview topics were presented in an open-ended format to allow for more flexibility and greater depth in the responses. Interviews were audio recorded in a private location and the completion of the interviews ranged from twenty-five minutes to an hour, with

most lasting about thirty minutes. After completion of the interviews, the data was transcribed using QSR NVivo2. Subsequently, the responses were analyzed to identify similar themes, and to describe the range of views and experiences across each of the 16 food pantries in an effort to identify best practices and common concerns.

To provide an incentive for the pantry administrators to participate in the study, the researcher received a grant through sponsored projects administration for an ASPIRE internal grant. A \$20 donation was made to each pantry that took time to participate in the study. Of the 16 pantries that agreed to participate in the interview, 15 pantries graciously accepted the donation.

### **Letter of Consent**

A letter of informed consent describing the purpose, and benefits of the study was provided to each food pantry administrator prior to the data collection (Appendix C). The letter of consent notified the participants of an oral interview. The pantry administrators were required to sign the letter of informed consent to participate in the study.

### **Methods**

Recruitment: Starting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the researcher personally delivered the letter of introduction (Appendix D-1), and the consent form (Appendix C), along with a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope, to each of the 23 food pantry administrators in Delaware County. The letter of consent contained a question at the bottom of the paper for the interview, asking the participant to check either: I agree to participate in the interview, or I do not agree to participate in the interview. If the participant checked that they agreed to the interview, there was an

additional question asking the pantry administrators to fill in their availability. After personally presenting the pantry with the letter of introduction and consent form in a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope, the researchers followed up with any pantry administrators who didn't respond one week later through a phone call. After two weeks of no response, the researcher personally visited the food pantry to speak with the pantry administrator regarding participation.

**Data Collection:** The researcher reached out to each pantry administrator, based on their pre-determined availability, to schedule a one-hour, one-on-one interview (Appendix B-2) in early Spring 2018. The researcher worked with the interviewee to identify a location that provided privacy. Most of the interviews were held at the local food pantries, a few were at the pantry administrators house, and one was at a local library. The interviews were recorded using a Sony recorder. The recorder had a USB attached, so the interviews were uploaded on the researcher's computer between recordings. Once the interviews were complete, the responses were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and anonymized where needed using the software QSR NVivo2 to interpret the responses.

## **Data Analysis**

The design of the paper presented a phenomenological approach, which describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This report focused on the phenomenon of managerial styles and strategies of food pantries in Delaware County. The inquirer collected data from the differing local pantry administrators who have experienced the phenomenon and developed a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals. This description consisted of "what" they experienced and "how" they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). In order to develop a better

understanding of the features of the phenomenon and the management behind the food pantries in Delaware County, it was important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences.

Following interview transcription, data analysis procedure components included coding, and sorting into major themes (Weiss, 1994). The researcher highlighted groups of varying-sized words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs from each interview that were then coded into various categories (Basil, 2003). As this extensive process was carried out, the coding was closely examined, and the major themes were identified using the constant comparative method. The major themes created represented the central research questions, while the sub-themes represented the common responses of the interview questions. Coding, sorting, and interaction with the data helped to develop the final categories presented in the *Results* section. Following, the researcher was able to back up the identified themes with quotes, supporting and explaining why each subtheme was decided. NVivo gave the researcher a place to organize, store and easily retrieve the data and corresponding quotes. If the researcher was looking for anything specific within the transcriptions, the explore tab in NVivo was utilized. This specific tool allowed the researcher to search and run a query on any word present in the text. If there were matches, the different transcriptions and number of references present in each would appear, allowing the researcher to easily obtain what they were looking for. Overall, NVivo gave the researcher one platform to store and sort all of the data obtained from each interview.

## **Summary**

This qualitative study was designed to identify effective management strategies used by food pantry administrators in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity in Delaware

County, Indiana. Sixteen pantry administrators were recruited from the local food pantries for this data collection. The portion of the project described in this study was comprised of a one-on-one interview. The topics being assessed in the interview helped identify leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives. Data from the interview instrument were analyzed to determine management strategies implemented by food pantry managers. Interviewing pantry administrators about their best practices and sharing the detailed information with other food pantry administrators, can increase the knowledge of food banks, community members, and other pantries and potentially help reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. This chapter will present an overview of the results obtained from the interviews.

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

Of the 23 food pantries that were visited by the researcher, and personally given a letter of introduction and letter of consent in a pre-addressed envelope, 16 (70%) food pantry administrators agreed to participate in the study. Of the seven food pantries that didn't participate, three of the food pantry administrators denied participation in the interview and four administrators did not respond to multiple requests for participation.

Seventy-five percent (n=12) of the pantry administrators indicated they were volunteers while the rest (n=4) reported they were paid. Almost all (n=15) of the participants specified their position as permanent. Half of the administrators (n=8) reported working 10 hours or less per week and a majority (n=14) reported to have had no prior experience in food distribution.

Thirty-eight percent (n=6) were open once a month and twenty-five percent were open (n=4) twice a week. Additionally, all food pantries did not charge for access. A majority (75%) of the pantry administrators described their type of agency as faith-based, one (6%) identified as governmental, seven (44%) identified as non-governmental, and a half (50%) described their agency as choice. Lastly, a majority of the food pantry administrators (n=9) identified serving 100-300 individuals per month. While four participants identified serving 500-1000 individuals per month.

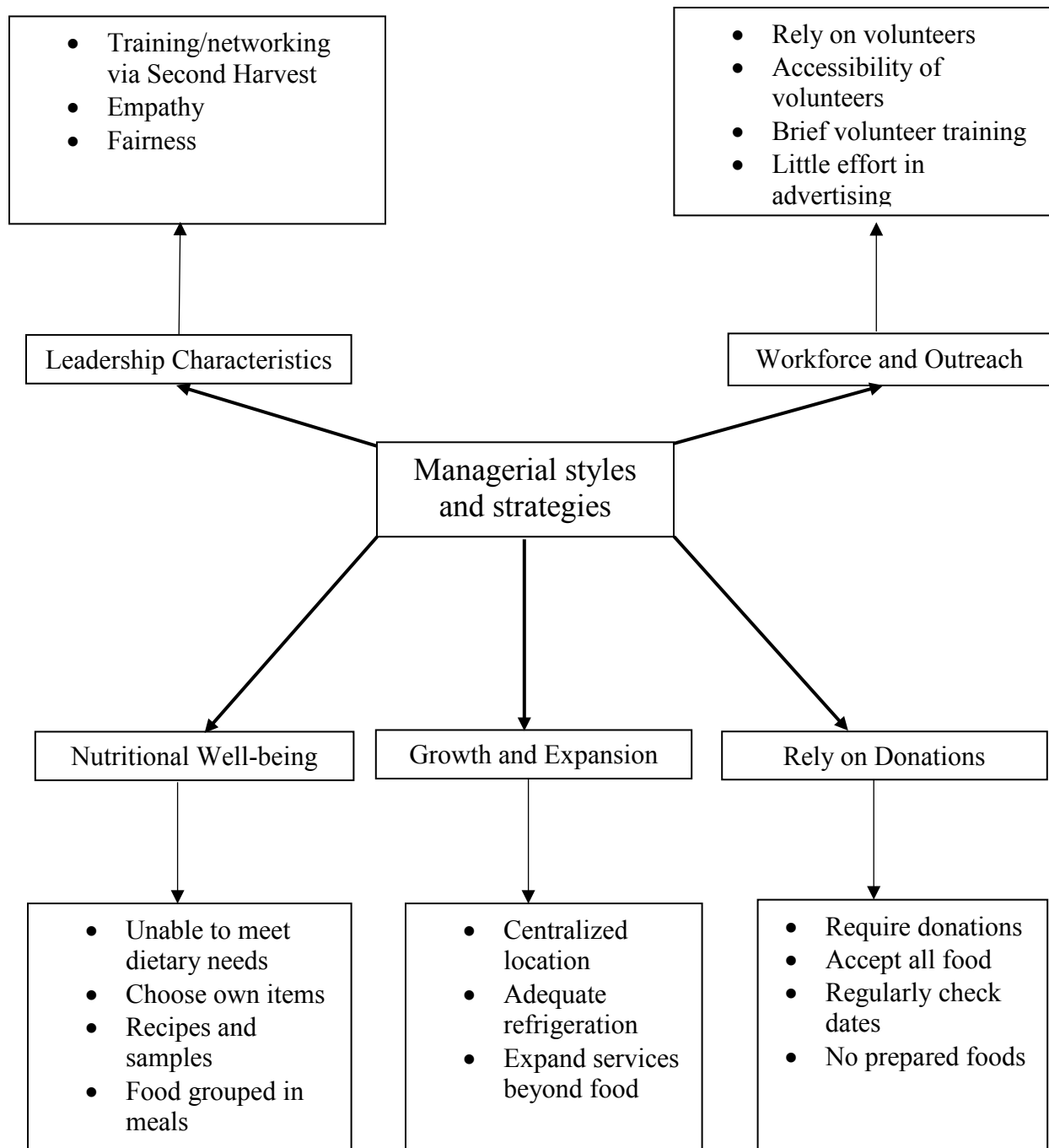
Table 1 *Demographic Characteristics of Pantry Administrators and their Agency (n=16)*  
**Characteristics of the Agency**

Type of Agency	n	%
Faith-based	12	75%
Governmental	1	6%
Non-governmental	7	44%
Choice	8	50%
Non-Choice	8	50%
<b>Days of Operation</b>		
Monday-Friday	1	6%
Once a Week	1	6%
Twice a Week	3	19%
Three Times a Week	1	6%
Once a Month	6	38%
Twice a Month	4	25%
<b>Charge to Access</b>		
No	16	100%
Yes	0	0%
<b>Individuals Served per Month</b>		
<100	3	19%
100-300	9	56%
500-1000	4	25%
<b>Characteristics of the administrator</b>		
Position Type	n	%
Paid	4	25%
Volunteer	12	75%
<b>Position Tenure</b>		
Permanent	15	94%
Rotating	1	6%
<b>Hours Worked per Week</b>		
<5 Hours	4	25%
5-10 Hours	4	25%
11-15 Hours	3	19%
>15 Hours	5	31%
<b>Prior Experience in Food Distribution</b>		
Yes	2	13%
No	14	88%
<b>Length of Current Position</b>		
<5 Years	6	38%
5-10 Years	5	31%
>10 Years	5	31%



## **Description of Key Themes**

Five major themes emerged from the data: (a) There are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, (b) There are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service entities, (c) Food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients, (d) Food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs, and (e) Food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles. The emerging themes evolved from thematic analysis framed from the interview questions until the responses became significantly repetitive throughout the sixteen completed interviews. Figure 1 presents the five major themes and 18 sub-themes that shaped the pantry administrator's managerial styles and strategies.



**Figure 1: Management Styles and Strategies used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County Indiana**

## **RQ1. How do Food Pantry Administrators Define their Role as a Leader?**

### There are Unique Leadership Characteristics Shared by Pantry Operators

The analysis of the leadership characteristics shared by the pantry administrators led to three sub-themes: (a) A pantry leader is under the guidance of Second Harvest, (b) A pantry leader is empathetic, and (c) A pantry leader values fairness.

#### *A Pantry Leader is Under the Guidance of Second Harvest*

Several food pantry administrators referenced Second Harvest food bank as a major guiding organization for their food pantries. A number of administrators mentioned going to Second Harvest food bank once a year for training and for networking purposes. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized food pantry explained that for their training, they were,

In partnership with Second Harvest, we have to go by their guidelines. We have to post a food storage maintenance guide publically. How to maintain food through temperature and expiration date. Quality control as there is a best by, use by, and sell by. Personal cleanliness and pest control. When you start off the big training is once a year, and then it becomes once every two years.

The aforementioned statement pointed out that Second Harvest thoroughly trained the pantry administrators and monitored the food pantries to ensure that they followed proper guidelines. The same pantry administrator as above mentioned, “We are held accountable for everything, from how the food is on the shelf to how the food is distributed.”

Other pantry administrators further discussed the annual Second Harvest meetings and the networking that occurred between the pantry administrators of the different food pantries. An administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated, “Only when we meet up at annual meetings, we exchange information.” A pantry administrator from a smaller-sized pantry added, “We all

come together to talk about possible issues, what they like or dislike and what is going on.” It was noted that the networking, or the interaction between the pantry administrators of different pantries, typically occurred once a year during the yearly Second Harvest meetings. This was the time where the administrators came together to talk through topics or problems that arose. However, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry included, “More networking would be fantastic, that is the ideal thing because it is like we are stepping over each other. They leave here and go to another one, and it is like if we all pull our resources together, how much better this would be.” Overall, it was noted that Second Harvest played a big part in the organization and guidance of most of the food pantries, as they helped in assisting the appropriate training needed and occasional networking.

#### *A Pantry Leader is Empathetic*

When asked the question “What qualities does a manager in your position need to be successful?”, almost all of the food pantry administrators identified the need to be empathetic. A pantry administrator from a large pantry stated, “You deal with a lot of different types of people with serious issues and they may come in here angry and they are not angry with this person in this position, but they are angry with what is going on in their life.” The above administrator discussed that for many clients, the experience of visiting a pantry was embedded with misguided frustrations that may have been directed towards pantry workers. Serving as a pantry administrator likely entailed a need to be understanding and non-judgmental in cases where a client expressed a frustration against something during their visit that may have been connected to underlying life difficulties outside of the pantry space. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry mentioned that having a love for the people that came through the line every week was the most important quality to entail. They stated that just because an individual needed to

utilize a food pantry for assistance, that did not define who they were and classify them into a group, separate from those that did not use a food pantry.

Definitely. Number one, you have got to love people. You have to have compassion and patience, and you can not group anyone and put them in a box. They are individuals and they have needs and lives just like us. I see them no different than you and I. If you don't have those kinds of qualities, then don't even step into it.

A food pantry administrator from another medium sized pantry additionally stated that to serve people, a leader needed to be motivated.

Someone who is motivated to serve people and to connect with people despite their needs or limitations, again that discrimination piece is huge. Someone who is motivated by compassion and able despite the circumstances to see a person as a human being with needs, rights, a history, and possibly a family.

It was explained that everyone had needs and rights for food pantry assistance.

A manager in this position had to be empathetic and treat people with respect because as a pantry administrator from a smaller-sized food pantry noted: “Someday we may need to be in a food pantry line, and it is not easy going to a food pantry.”

#### *A Pantry Leader Values Fairness*

A majority of the food pantry administrators proudly and confidently stated that they could serve and provide food to each individual that visited their establishment. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated, “The first one gets just the same as the last one”, while a pantry administrator from a large food pantry stated, “We can't always have enough to give to everybody, but we always have something”. No matter the size of the pantry, or even the amount or type of food that was given, it was noted that a pantry leader valued

fairness, and no one had ever left without food. A food pantry administrator that served one of the largest amounts of individuals per month was able to clarify that, “We have never sent anyone away. Never. Even if we had to go to the store to purchase food.” This showed how much the pantry was willing to serve those in need. If there was a time in which they did not have the correct amount of food for each individual that walked through the door, they were willing to go to the store and purchase food to meet the needs of their clients. A pantry administrator that was open once a week also stated that with all the services that their church had going on, nobody had left without food. Aside from the weekly pantry and the sack of food that was obtained, there was also a meal that the individuals were able to receive. “Everybody is able to get something. Nobody leaves this place empty handed. Especially with our other ministry going on, they get a full meal and a sack lunch. If there is any extra, they also send those home with them. One way or another they get something from the food pantry.”

In conclusion, fairness was highly valued at a majority of the food pantries in Delaware County, as the pantry administrators did what they could to make sure that none of the individuals walked away empty-handed.

## **RQ2. What Principles Guide Agency Organization Across Food Pantries?**

### Distinct Principles Guide How Agencies Organize Themselves as Community-Service Entities

While determining how the food pantry administrators organized their agencies and served the needs of the community members, five sub-themes emerged: (a) Agencies rely heavily on volunteer labor, (b) Agencies identify minimal challenges in finding and maintaining volunteers, (c) Agencies briefly train pantry volunteers, and (d) Agencies spend minimal effort spreading the word regarding their services.

### *Agencies Rely Heavily on Volunteer Labor*

All of the food pantry administrators were able to indicate that they relied heavily on volunteer labor to help meet the needs of all those that walked through the line. Various pantry administrators reported that the volunteers assisted in multiple tasks, such as picking up the food, packing food sacks, greeting customers, stocking shelves, and checking temperatures. A pantry administrator from a large pantry stated, “We have to have a lot of volunteers; our volunteers are about 10-20 a month. When we go and pick up the food, we have to bring it here and that takes a lot.” It was indicated that the food had to be picked up, and with the assistance of the many individuals that volunteered monthly, they were able to obtain the food and bring it back to the food pantry for distribution.

Further, it was determined that no matter how the pantries distributed their food, volunteers played a huge role in helping provide the community members with the food. The volunteers were able to fill the individuals’ sacks with the items they wanted, or there were others that had designated roles, such as handing out coupons.

A pantry administrator from a large pantry stated, “They go through with their bags, as there are volunteers at each station asking what items they want.” While, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry reported, “They bring their selection sheet back here and I have two volunteers here. They get a grocery sack and fill them up because they are coming in pretty quick. Then, the girl out there will give them their coupon for the milk, bread, and eggs.” Additionally, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated, “Another thing that we do when the people come and get the things, we provide them car service. They don’t carry bags; we are serving them.” This pantry administrator indicated that as volunteers at the food pantry, they were serving the community members from the time they walked in the door until the time

they left. In order to serve the community members, rather it is weekly or monthly, the help from volunteers was highly relied on and appreciated.

#### *Agencies Identify Minimal Challenges in Finding and Maintaining Volunteers*

Nearly all of the pantry administrators were able to verify that they had little to no difficulty when finding and maintaining volunteers. A pantry administrator from a large pantry pointed out that in order to maintain volunteers one must have made it an enjoyable experience. If there were decisions to be made, they worked to include the volunteers, which allowed them to feel more involved with the food pantry. “I have had really good luck. You have to have fun and involve people. I think that the more entitlement you give to the people, the better you are.”

A few of the pantry administrators pointed out that the volunteers within their pantry were also individuals that they served. A large pantry administrator stated, “We have to have a lot of volunteers. We have people lined up because we also help our volunteers.” While, a smaller pantry administrator noted, “The volunteers are increasing, probably 80% of our volunteers use the pantry.” The aforementioned statements indicated that not only were community members receiving assistance through the food pantries, but they were also giving back by volunteering. One of the pantry administrators mentioned that when they volunteered “They feel like they are doing something to contribute.” Another pantry administrator stated, “It makes them feel as if they have accomplished something and it wasn't just a handout.”

Many pantry administrators also mentioned welcoming volunteers of varying ages, “I have those that are as young as 5 and as old as 85”, noted a large pantry administrator. Additionally, those from different groups were welcome to volunteer their time. Rather it was a school group or individuals from a church, volunteers were volunteers, and agencies appreciated their labor. A pantry administrator from a large pantry stated, “We actually have young girls in



grade school that comes and helps too, and they have a blast”. Also, an administrator from a small pantry indicated, “We have Ball State volunteers and those from other churches.”

As pantry administrators experienced minimal challenges in finding and maintaining volunteers, it provided the food pantries with the number of volunteers that were needed.

#### *Agencies Briefly Train Pantry Volunteers*

Most of the pantry administrators indicated that they only briefly trained the volunteers, as there was not much training needed. A pantry administrator from a small pantry stated, “We talk about what needs to be done and what should be done; it is not difficult work.” When asking a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry if they trained their volunteers, they responded with, “Just very briefly. If it is their first time with us, they do spend 10-15 minutes with them and show them the operation. And we always have someone who has worked in the pantry previously, in there working with them.” At this pantry, they briefly ran through the agency with the volunteers if it was their first day. Then, the observation aspect allowed the volunteers to learn from a previous pantry worker. Another pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry further identified,

It's not any heavy training. The girl that handles the registration she has to know how to keep those book and records. Even the one that hands out the selection sheet, she has to know what to look for. Make sure that they fill that out right, make sure that they put how many people are in the household. And if they are a regular proxy or new, I need to know that for my records.

The aforementioned quote indicated, though not difficult, organizing the paperwork that came with running the food pantry was important.

An administrator from one of the largest pantries reported the general requirements for their volunteers. Rather than training, they had guidelines. These guidelines were brief, as they encouraged appropriate traits from the volunteers. Among all of the traits that were required, respect and love for others was the biggest necessity. “I just have general guidelines: smile, be respectful, and I encourage specific language. Respect is the first thing; they need to be there with an open heart.” Food pantries relied heavily on volunteers, though first, one typically went through some type of brief training that was recommended at the different agencies.

#### *Agencies Spend Minimal Effort Advertising their Services*

A majority of the pantry administrators identified that minimal effort was spent advertising their services. Most of them acknowledged the strength of word of mouth, specifying that word got around quickly, and information was passed on. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry further identified that they didn’t pursue any type of advertising. They had people showing up from all over town due to the word spread from one individual to another. “We don’t have to because it is word of mouth. There are people all over town that we don’t know. We don’t have to do any type of advertising, none at all.” Another pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry shared the same response, in that word of mouth got around quickly to the community members. They had individuals outside of their town coming to visit their agency just due to the fact that they heard about their services through somebody else. “I hesitate on heavy advertising because the people here locally know. I get new people here all the time, and it is always by word of mouth, ‘somebody told me that this was here.’” Word of mouth was such a powerful tool when it came to obtaining community members that agencies spent little effort in advertising their services.

### **RQ3. How do Food Pantries See Themselves as Contributing to Nutritional Well-Being?**

#### Food Pantries are Attentive to the Nutritional Well-Being of their Clients

Assessment of the pantry administrator's attention to the nutritional well-being of their clients led to four sub-themes: (a) Food pantries would like to accommodate special dietary needs (even if they are unable), (b) Food pantries allow clients the ability to choose their own food items, (c) Food pantries provide recipes and samples for new items, and (d) Food is grouped into meal-based options.

#### *Food Pantries Would Like to Accommodate Special Dietary Needs (Even if they are Unable)*

It was commonly stated among different food pantry administrators that, "We get what is available to us." The pantry administrators were unable to accommodate the different dietary needs of the community members, though they would have loved to have been able to. A pantry administrator from a large pantry weighed in, "As far as trying to tailor to special dietary needs, unfortunately, that would be in a perfect world, but we aren't receiving any grant money, we are just paying out of pocket." The pantry administrator specified that they were unable to fulfill the special dietary needs of the community because of the lack of funds. Receiving enough money through a grant would have provided an array of opportunities, such as accommodating dietary needs. However, at this particular pantry, the administrator was buying the food with their own money, which provided them with a procurement barrier. A pantry administrator from a smaller pantry also indicated money as a barrier, "We can't do that. We only have so much money that we can spend." Additionally, though not specifying the particular resources, a medium-sized pantry reported, "No, I wish that I could do that too, but resources don't permit." Both of the quotes above, from pantry administrators at the small and medium-sized pantries, were able to

reiterate the importance of resources. Obtainment of sufficient resources helped acquire the appropriate food items to help meet dietary needs.

A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry further identified that after communicating with Purdue Extension, minimal changes regarding canned items were made. The administrator specified that considering the dietary needs of others would be a possible change to consider for the future, as they were open to exploring and offering different dietary sections in their food pantry.

We had Purdue Extension come in, and she went through our stuff. So, I do get the pineapple in natural syrup, and the peaches in light syrup, but as far as any sugar-free we just don't do that. If someone has a special need, that may be something to think about in the future. Having a gluten-free section and diabetic section, that would be something to think about later; I would be open to that.

Most of the pantry administrators were unable to accommodate the special dietary needs of the community members that walked through the different food pantries, though they wished they could have with the appropriate resources.

#### *Food Pantries Allow Clients the Ability to Choose their Own Food Items*

After assessing if an individual that visited a food pantry had the possibility to meet their specified dietary needs, followed the question, "Have you received any training regarding different dietary needs?" If the food pantry was able to accommodate to the needs of the community members, did the pantry administrators assist if possible, questions arose? Most of the pantry administrators indicated that they followed what the clients said they needed, as most of the food pantries allowed clients the ability to choose their own food. A pantry administrator from a smaller pantry stated, "Hopefully if they came through, they would know what they can

and cannot have. You know what you cannot have so it is really not my job to say you can or cannot have something.” The quote above indicated that the pantry administrator relied on the community members’ judgements when it came to deciding what they could or could not have to accommodate their dietary needs. Various pantries, including a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry, further specified, “You see what we have. If they don’t want it, they just don’t take it.” Again, it was the community members decision to choose what they could or could not have, as the pantry administrator gave them choices to choose from. A pantry administrator from a large pantry reported, “What we do is we have someone stand in front of each skid of food to help pass out. If the clients want it, they can take it, if not they don’t have to. We don’t force food or pre-bag. If we have something that fits their need one day, they can have it.” While a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry also stated, “There is nothing that they are forced to take or anything that they are taking that is pre-bagged and wasting if they have an allergy or dietary restriction.” The pantry administrators from the medium and large-sized pantries reiterated the opportunity the clients had to choose their food. The pantries were not forcing specific food items upon any of the individuals. If a certain food did not fit within the community members needs or restrictions, they could have opted out of it. Though not acquiring training regarding special dietary needs, some of the food pantries offered their clients the ability to choose their own food. This opportunity then placed trust in the community member’s to know what items they could or could not have to accommodate their needs.

#### *Food Pantries Provide Recipes and Samples for New Items*

Food pantries accumulated various donations and food items from Second Harvest throughout the year that helped meet the needs of the community members in Delaware County. With so many different food items offered, some of them may have looked unfamiliar to the

clients. Furthermore, sometimes, the individuals may have known what an item was, yet they had never tried it before, therefore they were afraid to eat it. Many of the pantry administrators reported, that in the case of a new or unknown item, the pantry provided the clients with recipes and samples. “Last summer we had a lot of eggplants and they didn’t know what to do with it, so we started giving out recipes. We even had samples for them to taste the recipe. We are providing opportunities for them.” A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry reported that they offered their community members samples and recipes to try. The opportunities that were being provided to the clients through the actions of the pantry administrator, meant more meal options through differing food items. A pantry administrator from a larger pantry similarly stated,

We have printed out recipes. Sometimes I will open it up and have it in a dixie cup for them to try. We do samples, but we do recipes for them also. Plantains was a big one to get them to try, but we did recipes and now they like them. You have to work at it, as it doesn’t come by itself. What one person hates, another person likes.

The above quote indicated that this pantry administrator also supplied their client with samples and recipes to try items they were unfamiliar with. Opening up the food and providing the community members with a taste of the different items broadened their possible likings.

Providing educational materials, such as samples and recipes, could have eliminated clients from throwing food items away. An administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated, “One time we had pomegranates, and they were throwing them in the trash because they didn’t know what they were. I cut one open and had them taste the seeds, and now everyone wished they wouldn’t have thrown theirs away.” The clients were unaware of what a pomegranate was because to them it was an item, they were unfamiliar with. After providing the community members with a sample,

they understood the taste of pomegranate seeds and enjoyed it. This pantry administrator indicated the importance of educating the clients on new items.

A smaller pantry was able to use the resources of Purdue Extension to help in educating their clients. Purdue Extension was able to teach a class to the community members about the unknown food items offered at the pantry. More than just providing samples, Purdue Extension cooked the food for the clients, provided them with the nutrition of the food, and explained storage details.

Purdue Extension has a class right before and they take your name and make a list of all who participated in the class. The items are cooked right in front of them, and they get nutritious information about the foods that are there, how to store the food, and how to keep the foods shelf-life. They pass all that out, and then they give out the samples. When food pantries were presented with unknown food items, they provided clients with recipes and samples, which in the end hopefully led to less waste and more education on varying foods.

#### *Food is Grouped into Meal-Based Options*

Not all of the food pantries interviewed were choice pantries, therefore the pantry administrators assisted in assembling pre-made bags for the clients. Since the community members were unable to choose the food items they wanted, how did the pantry administrators decide what was placed in the bags? It was questioned if there were any strategies or nutritional concepts that were taken into consideration when planning the items distributed to the clients. It was commonly reported that the foods provided were grouped into meal-based options as they pre-made the bags. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry reported offering staple items so the clients could create meals. The food provided typically included some type of vegetable, carbohydrate, protein, and fruit. Within the items, the community members were able

to organize the items how they pleased, to create a meal from. “The ones that they get week to week include staple things like corn, green beans, making sure that they have pasta or some type of carb, and they get tuna and fruit. Some type of core item that they could make a meal from.”

A pantry administrator from a very small pantry was able to assess the items the pantry currently had, and from those, decided what was needed to create a dish. The pantry administrator tried to pair items that made sense together. “We try to give them items that they can put together. Like giving them fruit cocktail with jello so that they can make a dessert, or tuna with tuna helper. I try to give them things that they can make different items out of.” Additionally, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated,

We give everybody some type of drinks, we always try to give them rice. If we have any meat, that is the first thing on the list because most people need meat. We always try to give foods to make meals, like peanut butter. You can always eat peanut butter and jelly, peanut butter and this or this. We try to put in canned goods like tuna and things like that to make meals.

The aforementioned quote specified that along with the drinks and rice that was always provided, meat was the most important item that the pantry tried to provide. Providing a protein-based item within the pre-made bags offered the community members a variety of options to help in creating that meal. Supplying clients with various staple items in pre-made bags led to a plethora of meal-based options to be assembled.



#### **RQ4. How do Food Pantry Leaders Define the Future of Their Organization?**

##### Food Pantries are Interested in Growth and Expansion to Better Meet Client Needs

As conversations unraveled, the understanding that the pantry administrators wanted to further grow and expand their pantry services to better meet clients' needs was developed, further leading to three sub-themes: (a) Food pantries would like to be centralized in location, (b) Food pantries would like to have consistent access to refrigeration, and (c) Food pantries would like to provide more services than just food assistance.

##### *Food Pantries Would Like to be More Centralized in Location*

There are over 20 food pantries in Delaware County, and going from pantry to pantry for most of the community members could have been tiring. As indicated by an administrator from a medium-sized pantry, "For some people, their full-time job is to go to all of the food pantries." Various pantry administrators reported that they would have liked the food pantries to have come together in a more centralized location so that the individuals did not have to spend so much time traveling for food assistance. Another pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated,

I would like to see a more centralized distribution, where people don't spend every day of the month going from pantry to pantry to get enough. We would waste less, offer more, and better suit the client's needs. If they can go one time a month, have a swipe card that says here is what you are eligible for, here is what you get, and then you are done for the month. They can then spend their time more productively.

A centralized distribution within a centralized location could have better suited the client's needs, providing more opportunities. Furthermore, individuals would not have had to spend a majority of their time going from pantry to pantry and could have used their free time in other ways. A pantry administrator from a large pantry also wished that everyone could have

cooperatively came together. Taking the ownership aspect out of the leadership and incorporating smaller surrounding pantries into the larger ones could have been beneficial.

I would like to see us work together in a cooperative type of food pantry. I have found in conversation as well as just seeing it, people want to own what they are doing here in Delaware County, which is unfortunate because they are some of the smaller facilities that could benefit from a pantry this size. All it takes is one of us to unlock the building. I would like to see that happen, but I haven't yet.

A pantry administrator from a smaller pantry similarly identified that pantry administrators needed to replace the "I" with "We" and understand they could not only do things their way. They needed to visualize the overall goal and identify the best decisions to help those in the community.

The best thing would be if we could come together and have one locally run place for people to come. Sometimes it is difficult for me to wrap my finger around that, like how that happens. How that happens, is we get rid of the I and look at the we. 'When I want to do something, I want to do it here, I want to do it my way because I think my way is better, and I want to get some credit for it.' Replace I with we, 'what is the best policy to help the people here in the community so they don't have to go to 4-5 pantries every month, they don't have to lug these things all over the place. We could have transportation for people, we could help people with that. We could do a lot if we could work together, but having a centralized location is what it would take. We would have to have a staff, then a lot of volunteers. They could go there instead of coming here and our folks could help them.' I think that a lot of people would do that, we have a lot of people that ask how they can help.

### *Food Pantries Would Like to Have Consistent Access to Refrigeration*

Several food pantries specified that they needed to have consistent access to refrigeration. A pantry administrator from a large pantry reported, “My dream setup would be to be able to have the capability to have refrigeration so that I can also have a source to provide the milk, the meat, and stuff. I would love to be able to give them milk, meat, and eggs.” With appropriate appliances, the pantry could have properly stored different foods and provided the clients with items that they were currently unable to receive. A pantry administrator from a small pantry also wanted refrigeration, to provide better storage and offer more options.

We are in the process of getting refrigeration because we don’t have storage whatever we get in, we have to make sure it all goes out because we don’t have anywhere to store it.

Once we get storage, then we can select what we get and then keep it. Like one day we were able to get turkeys, we were able to get chickens. When it becomes available we say we would like to have that but we can't keep it. So we can only get what we can get at that time. So we will be able to better pick and choose when to store it better.

Without refrigeration, this pantry administrator strategically purchased items. They could only choose food for that specific day at the pantry because there was nowhere to store any leftovers. However, if storage was available, and the pantry administrator wanted to purchase an item and store it for later, they would have been able to.

Access to refrigeration was available for one of the largest food pantries, however, it was not the most accessible situation. The pantry administrator stated, “I would love to have a walk-in cooler/freezer. Right now, we partner with a local business, Munsee Meats, and they provide us with a refrigerator truck Thursday when the food is delivered to Saturday when the food pantry is.” The above pantry used a local resource to help properly store their food that was

needed to serve the community members. The local business had a truck with refrigeration, that they were willing to let the food pantry borrow, from the day the food was delivered to the day the food was served. However, the pantry preferred consistent access to walk-in refrigeration. Another pantry administrator from a large pantry also reported having refrigeration, though they preferred larger appliances to help store their food. With larger refrigeration, more items could be stocked for later use. “I think a dream setting would be to have a larger walk-in fridge and freezer to store our products a little more excessively for us on the back-end.” With serving an array of individuals a variety of foods, came the need for different appliances. Of the appliances, consistent access to refrigeration could have played a huge factor in the amount and types of food purchased.

#### *Food Pantries Would Like to Provide More Services than just Food Assistance*

The pantry administrators that were in charge of the pantries put in a lot of effort in order to meet the needs of every client that walked through their door. Some pantry administrators even indicated that they would have liked to provide more than just food assistance. They would have liked to open up the doors of their food pantries to further expand different opportunities for the community members. A pantry administrator from a large food pantry stated, “I would love to have a Friday night movie night in here for the kids. I would love to involve Ball State more and have students come and help; that would be ideal for kids to have a safe haven here.” Rather than just coming to the food pantry once a month for food, the pantry administrator suggested including other weekly services for surrounding children. Additionally, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry envisioned expanding the food pantry into a community center, an area for individuals of all ages.

To be able to not only be a food pantry but to also become more of a community center where we could have classes for people in helping to manage their money. A lot of the children that are on the low end of the income, that are not doing well in school and are still on that poverty thinking really need help learning to read. I would really enjoy having a facility that we would have enough space to not only help them but to have an area for cooking and food nutrition classes.

In addition to the food assistance services provided, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry reported that they taught men different qualities of becoming a gentleman. These were qualities of pride, respect, and care that men incorporated into their everyday lives.

I would like to incorporate more than just food. We are also teaching them how to take care of themselves, take pride in themselves, and how to respect each other. We try to lead by example and explain that they are gentlemen. If someone needs help taking things to the car, help them, or how to serve the children first, then the ladies, and lastly the men. Some pantry administrators wanted to further expand their pantry beyond food assistance and offer varying services to the community members.

#### **RQ5. What Principles Guide Food Procurement/Distribution Practices Across Pantries?**

##### Food Pantries Rely Heavily on Donated Items Distributed to Clients with Guiding Principles

As the food procurement and food distribution practices within the food pantries were discussed, four sub-themes emerged: (a) Donations are critical, (b) All donations are accepted, (c) The dates of items are checked regularly, and (d) Prepared foods are not accepted.

### *Donations are Critical*

All of the pantry administrators recognized how critical donations were. A pantry administrator from a medium- sized pantry reported, “We are strictly donations; our church does not contribute financially to this at all.” Additionally, a pantry administrator from a large pantry identified how the support of the surrounding community was crucial. Whether others were providing gift cards or money, the contributing donations were heavily relied upon. “We totally, really rely on people’s donations, whether it is a financial gift or people who go to Meijer to purchase a gift card. We have a very supportive community.”

Support from local agencies and organizations in Delaware County played a key role in food procurement. Surrounding schools and services participated in various food drives to help a medium-sized pantry. “Delta high school, Delta middle school, the ambulance department here in town, the post office, and the fire department all have food drives for us.” An administrator from a small food pantry also identified the support of organizations to help run food drives for their pantry. Furthermore, another food pantry in the county also donated their leftover items.

We do get donations from churches, different organization, even fraternities have gone and done drives for us and brought it over. Then, there is another food pantry that when they have extras because they do theirs twice a month, we can glean from them if they have some things left over from that previous week.

A pantry administrator from a medium-sized food pantry similarly reported receiving leftovers from a surrounding food pantry and local churches. “Other churches help us out. There is another agency that has a food pantry every month, and they call us when they have leftovers. We get individuals that will bring bags of apples or oranges, or they will bring bags of groceries. Yeah,

we get a lot of donations.” The surrounding community was helpful in providing donations, which was critical in supplying food pantries with an appropriate collection of food.

### *All Donations are Accepted*

A majority of the food pantry administrators specified that they accepted all foods. Giving the clients an option of choosing to take or not to take different foods, allowed a pantry administrator from a small pantry to accept all items. “We never refuse anything, we just put it on the cart, and it is their choice if they want to take something.” A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry additionally stated that as long as the items were in good condition, they were all accepted. Also, they too left it to the clients to choose which foods they preferred. “We accept everything as long as it is not tampered with. We do encourage our clients to take a variety of foods. It is client choice so we can’t say you have to take vegetables, but we do limit potato chips or cookies, as they are not allowed to get all of their items from this category.” A pantry administrator from a large pantry further identified that they accepted all food, as families were going to appreciate anything. “We accept everything, food is food. Especially with it being summer and the kids being home, they are going to want junk food, and the parents are going to be appreciative to get anything.” Another pantry administrator from a larger pantry stated, “I accept everything because we aren’t here to provide a balanced meal for people. We are here to supplement what they already have. If we get some treats for the kids, that is fine. I like to have healthy stuff here, but it is just whatever is available to us.” They were there to provide supplemental food items, and not there to supply individuals with a composed, put-together meal. Even though the pantry administrator enjoyed having healthier items available, if less healthy food items came in, they were accepted, as it was what was provided. Most food pantries accepted all donations to better help fulfill the needs of the community members.

### *The Dates of Items are Checked Regularly*

A common response from the pantry administrators when answering how they determined if the food was safe, was that the dates of the items were checked regularly. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates guidelines that specify what the dates on the can represent, and a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry reported using these federal guidelines as they checked the dates. “We check all of the dates, and we go by all the federal guidelines of how long a can is good.” In addition to looking at the dates on the food, a pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry pointed out that they teach their clients the different meanings behind the different dates. “We will look at dates, and we will be able to share our knowledge about what sell by, best by, and use by mean.” Along with checking the dates, a pantry administrator from a small pantry stated that they also observed the cans to make sure that nothing was visibly wrong with the appearance. “We observe the item, making sure that there is nothing on the can, and check the date.”

A food pantry administrator from a small pantry identified that they went through all of their items before being shelved. For the items that were past the due date, they would circle the date and place it on a miscellaneous cart, where individuals could have chosen to take whatever items they decided.

I make sure to look at the dates before it even gets on the shelf to bag it. Now I do things like mac and cheese that are over the date. Anything with tomatoes gets thrown out after the date, but some things I will circle the date, so they can see it and I place it on the cart.

If they want it, they can take it, if not I will throw it away.

Another pantry administrator from a small pantry similarly reported that they placed outdated foods on a table for individuals to grab as they pleased. The decision to take it or not was the



community member's that walked through the door. "If it is not really old, I will make a table for the people here and tell them this is outdated and then if they want to take it that is fine, but it is on them." Verifying the safety of the foods obtained, entailed regularly checking the dates of the items.

### *Prepared Foods are Not Accepted*

Though a majority of the food pantries reported accepting all donations, most of them clarified one item that they could not accept, and that was prepared food. Pantry administrators were unable to accept homemade items, as they were unsure of what specifically was in the food. "It has to be made in this building and then we can pass it out. You cannot open things, you have to give out sealed items. Except for apples and oranges, and that kind of stuff." The only homemade items that this medium-sized pantry was allowed to accept was made inside their facility or items that were sealed and wrapped. A food pantry administrator stated that they had turned down donations of corn that had been prepared from home that would have otherwise been accepted if it was donated fresh. "We have had people that have offered to give us sweet corn in the summer that they didn't use, but it was self-prepared. We will accept the product fresh." A pantry administrator from a larger food pantry additionally reported that they received fish as a donation. However, the fish came in a big box and not individually wrapped. A pantry administrator was unable to repackage food items on their own, therefore they could not serve the fish. "Last year we were offered restaurant-style fish, a 50-pound box that was not individually packaged, so we could not give it out because we can't repackage."

Accepting homemade foods could have led to serious issues. If a client were to get sick because of an item, this could have led to hospital bills, further placing a financial burden on the individual. A pantry administrator from a medium-sized pantry stated that they knew that people

were donating foods such as home-canned items out of generosity, but they could not accept them. “We cannot. That was a problem we ran into. People like to do canning, but we cannot. We don’t know if things are done properly. We know people’s hearts are there, but it is just something that we cannot do. It is a liability for us; you could send them to the hospital where they acquire bills.” Though donations were critical in meeting client’s needs, it was understood that homemade foods were not accepted.

### **Themes and Responses Commonly Stated: Size of the Pantry and Choice Vs. Non-Choice**

When identifying the different demographics behind the sixteen interviewed food pantries, one of the questions asked how many individuals the food pantries served per week or month. With this response, the researcher was then able to classify the food pantries as a small, medium, or large-sized pantry. Of the sixteen total food pantry administrators that participated, six were from a small pantry, six were from a medium-sized pantry, and four were from a large pantry. Then, it was further noted that similar themes and responses appeared within specifically sized food pantries.

First, when the pantry administrators specified a quality that was necessary to be successful in their position, a greater selection of small pantry administrators clarified empathy as a requirement. Some of the other common responses consisted of being flexible, organized, and patient. A majority of the pantry administrators from medium-sized pantries stated the importance of Second Harvest in the training that is required of the food pantry administrators. While the pantry administrators from the small pantries commonly reported the simplistic training that was required of the volunteers. To further spread the word of the services offered at the food pantries, the pantry administrators from the medium-sized pantries frequently indicated

the strength of “word of mouth”. Other common responses included the Edible Muncie list with Delaware county food pantries and social media. Furthermore, pantry administrators from both the small and large pantries equally reported the need for a centralized location.

When the pantry administrators were discussing the nutritional well-being of their clients, both the small and medium pantries tied when reporting their inability to meet the special dietary needs of those that walk through the door. Also, pantry administrators from both small and medium pantries commonly discussed their use of recipes and samples when an item was unfamiliar. Additionally, pantry administrators from all three different sized pantries equally indicated that they based their clients’ needs on what they said they needed, as most of the food pantries allowed clients the ability to choose their own food anyway.

Furthermore, when acquiring information about the food pantries food distribution and food procurement strategies, a majority of the pantry administrators from medium-sized pantries reported accepting all food. In addition, most of the pantry administrators from the small pantries specified that they looked at the dates on the cans to assess nutritional quality. If the dates are still within reason, a majority of the administrators then placed the items on a miscellaneous table, leaving the decision to take or not take up to the clients. When acquiring foods, pantry administrators from medium-sized pantries popularly specified donations as a necessity in helping fulfill the needs of the community members. If donations didn’t completely fulfill the needs, pantry administrators then commonly indicated buying groceries through Aldi’s or Meijer. Since a majority of the small pantries are non-choice, it only makes sense that a majority of the pantry administrators reported the distribution of foods that together make a meal. Lastly, pantry administrators from large pantries frequently indicated the need for proper refrigeration/freezer storage.

When looking at choice pantries vs. non-choice pantries, four small, three medium, and one large-sized pantry classified themselves as non-choice. While, two small, three medium, and three large-sized pantries classified themselves as choice. Pantry administrators from small pantries frequently reported the requirement of simplistic training for their volunteers. This could have been due to the non-choice pantries applying a different tactic of distributing food and needing less critical skills than a choice pantry. In a choice pantry, an individual typically helps client's shop. Volunteer's would need to know more about nutrition information in products and access to community resources, as they often have more direct interaction with clients. Additionally, most of the pantry administrators from the medium-sized pantries indicated the importance of word of mouth. This may have been more prevalent in a medium versus larger sized pantry because of the overall size of the pantry. The medium-sized pantries are possibly not as popular as the larger pantries, needing word of mouth to further spread the hours of service. Lastly, a majority of the large pantries reported the need for appropriate storage. This could be indicative of having to serve a greater array of individuals and needing more room to properly store food that is bought in bulk.

### **Themes and Responses Commonly Stated: Administrator's Length of Service at their Current Position**

When looking beyond the different sized pantries, there were other demographics that noted similar themes and responses. Specifically, the author looked at the pantry administrator's length of service at their current position and classified them as either, less than five years, five to ten years, or greater than ten years. Out of the sixteen pantry administrators that participated in

this study, six reported to have worked for less than five years, five under five to ten years, and five under greater than ten years.

It was noted that a majority of the pantry administrators who had been in their position for greater than ten years often reported the need for a more centralized location. With more years of experience, the pantry administrators may have obtained a greater understanding of what the clients typically went through. The pantry administrators in this category may have been able to visualize the needs that could have been better met through the collaboration of pantries. Next, the pantry administrators who had been in their position for five to ten years and those less than five years commonly stated empathy as a requirement for a successful administrator. These administrators were mainly from small and medium-sized food pantries. This finding may have been indicative of the pantry administrators getting worn out after a certain period of time. The longer an individual is in a position, the less drive and love for their work they may have. Furthermore, looking at both the pantry administrators who have worked greater than ten years and five to ten years, they both contained the four large pantries that were interviewed. The reasoning behind this could have been because running a larger pantry takes more experience, as there are more clients' needs to be met. It could have taken years to establish a highly appreciated reputation and become known as a large pantry. Finally, pantry administrators who had been in their position for less than five years commonly reported accepting all of the food that they were offered. This could have been due to having less experience and time to acquire the appropriate resources that were needed to obtain food higher in necessary nutrients. With a lack of resources, they were in need of food, therefore accepted anything they could get.

### **Themes and Responses Commonly Stated: Faith Vs. Non-Faith-Based Pantries**

Only four of the 16 pantry administrators present in this study did not describe their food pantry as faith-based. The pantry administrators that ran these four food pantries did not state empathy when asked “In your view, what qualities does a manager in your position need to be successful in this position?”. Faith-based organizations are known to dedicate their time to helping people, which transcribes to being an empathetic individual. Therefore, since these pantry administrators were not in a faith-based organization, they may not have had similar feeling and understanding of empathy as administrators of food pantries located in a church. Also, these pantry administrators reported receiving minimal donations. Receiving minimal donations could have been due to the fact that they were not located in a church and most food donations came through the church and other charity-based organizations. With minimal contact with a church, this would have then led to a minimal collection of donations, as they may have been unable to thoroughly get their name and needs out to the community.

### **Summary**

Transcriptions of the sixteen one-on-one interviews held between the researcher and pantry administrators were closely coded, and five major themes emerged: (a) there are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, (b) there are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service entities, (c) food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients, (d) food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs, and (e) food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles. Then, from the five major themes, eighteen sub-themes were further developed. Within the different themes, the researcher was also

able to make connections within the data presented, showing responses commonly stated within specifically sized food pantries.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. This chapter will present a discussion of the findings and interconnections found within this study.

#### **Summary of Findings**

Of the sixteen pantry administrators, a majority specified their position as a volunteer and permanent. Their agencies were predominantly open once a month and no one charged their clients for access. Additionally, most of the food pantries were serving between 100-300 individuals. The responses shared by the pantry administrators led to the creation of five major themes (a) there are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, (b) there are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service entities, (c) food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients, (d) food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs, and (e) food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles. Following, eighteen subthemes were additionally developed.



### **There are Unique Leadership Characteristics Shared by Pantry Operators**

It was noted that 75 percent of the sixteen pantry administrators identified themselves as volunteers. Also, almost all of the food pantry administrators identified empathy as a quality that was needed in their position to be successful. Similar findings were reported by Wymer (1997) who investigated the relative efficiency of personal values, personality variables, and a measure of social connectedness in segmenting the market of volunteers for the nonprofit organization. He compared the levels of empathy between volunteers for nonprofit organizations and non-volunteers, and volunteers were found to have higher levels of empathy (Wymer, 1997).

This study showed that a majority of the food pantry administrators could serve and provide food to each individual that walked through the line. These findings were in contrast with a study looking at data from a 2010 survey of food pantries affiliated with the three largest food banks in North Carolina. On average, the food pantries served 5,792 clients in 2009. These small, community-based organizations sometimes turned clients away, because there were few staff or volunteers available, the pantry had a limited amount of food, clients were unqualified, or clients lived outside the service area (Paynter & Berner, 2014). Fairness was found to be an important quality in this present study, perhaps, because most of the pantry administrators spoken to were from small and medium-sized pantries. They could have had the ability to fairly, fulfill the needs of a smaller caseload of clients, in comparison to the larger pantries identified in the contrasting study.

Interpretation of findings for this current study also clarified that a pantry leader was under the guidance of Second Harvest food bank. At Second Harvest food bank, the pantries received training once a year. When the pantry administrators from the different food pantries got together at these annual meetings networking to discuss possible issues or concerns also

occurred. Having an organizational support network in nonprofit organizations was important to maximize relationships with key stakeholder groups (Balser & McCluskey, 2005). Experienced leaders could have worked within the community to develop relationships with individuals and other organizations, leading to diverse and sustainable funding, and effective volunteer recruitment retention strategies (Simonton, 1996). Second Harvest food bank, identified as the guiding organization in the current study, could have helped the pantry administrators further build and develop relationships with each other through the training and networking offered.

### **Distinct Principles That Guide How Agencies Organize as Community-Service Entities**

When exploring the organization behind the food pantries, pantry administrators in this study indicated the extent to which agencies relied on volunteer labor. The volunteers were a huge asset as they participated in various tasks such as picking up the food, packing food sacks, greeting customers, stocking shelves, and checking temperatures. According to a report by the Urban Institute on public charities, volunteering was an important component of the nonprofit sector and over two-fifths of public charities in the US relied on volunteers in 2017 (McKeever 2018). The largest use of volunteer hours in 2017 included tasks such as preparing food, collecting and delivering clothing or other goods, providing care, and teaching, counseling or mentoring (McKeever, 2018). In the present study, almost all activities relied on volunteer labor including some of the work done by administrators.

Pantry administrators in the present study mentioned that even with such a high need for volunteers they experienced minimal challenges when finding and maintaining volunteers. This result seemed inconsistent with a report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that reported that the volunteer rate declined by 0.4 percentage point to 24.9 percent for the year ending in September

2015. (United States Department of Labor, 2016). The results indicated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics looked at volunteering in all organizations in the United States, while this current study looked only at volunteering at food pantries, and this, therefore, may explain the large differences. The results of this current study seemed to show that volunteering in food pantries was an area where people did not seem to shy away from. According to Poppendieck (1998), people really wanted to help, as they cared about other people. She stated that volunteering in a food pantry was an opportunity to be hands-on and to help change another person's life (Poppendieck, 1998). The task of donating one's items and time to help in a food pantry could have seemed easy, as others felt good about doing it, but this feeling may have been different in other volunteer opportunities.

If an organization had good training plans for employees, it could enhance the performance of employees, as well as the organization (Khan, 2012). However, pantry administrators in this current study reported that they provided minimal training to volunteers, which included brief walkthroughs, a quick discussion of roles required, and general guidelines expected. In contrast, a study by Twill and colleagues detailed a cross-campus partnership effort of one university to establish a campus food pantry for students. Social work faculty created a volunteer training program that emphasized confidentiality and interaction (role play) (Twill, Bergdahl & Fensler, 2016). This study indicated the use of a more hands-on approach to training their volunteers, while the current study lacked that aspect and relied more on brief communication. The reasoning behind minimal training of volunteers in the current study could have been due to the quick turnaround of individuals, lack of time needed to train, or even the lack of concern for the treatment of clients. However, it is noted that training should have been interactive, as studies showed that individuals retained only 20% of what was heard in a lecture

setting, so one should have considered incorporating discussions, observations, role-playing, demonstrations, and writing into training programs (Community Tool Box, 2018).

### **Food Pantries are Attentive to the Nutritional Well-Being of their Clients**

After assessment of the pantry administrators' attention to the nutritional well-being of their clients, it was understood that the food pantries in Delaware County, Indiana, would have liked to accommodate special dietary needs, though they weren't always able to due to lack of adequate resources. A food bank in Franklin Township, New Jersey, reported that they tried to accommodate clients' special dietary needs by addition or substitution of some standard food items when possible. The clients had to call in advance to inform them of their special dietary needs. Examples of special food items substituted by the Franklin County food bank included low-salt foods, sugar-free foods, low-fat foods, food that doesn't require a heating source, baby food, and canned baby formula (Franklin Food Bank, 2019).

One way that the pantry administrators in the current study paid attention to the needs was by offering their clients choices and allowing them to choose their own foods. If a certain food did not fit within the community members needs or restrictions, they could have opted out of it. A study by Schwab (2013) found that when clients shopped for themselves it gave them more choice, freedom, and overall dignity as they could choose what they wanted. If they had dietary issues such as diabetes or needed foods with no sugar added and low in sodium, acquiring appropriate foods was possible (Schwab, 2013).

To avoid wastage of unfamiliar foods, pantry administrators in this study reported that a majority of the pantry administrators provided clients with recipes and samples. Greger and colleagues studied two pantries in Dane County, Wisconsin and revealed that less than half of the

252 surveyed food pantry users knew how to prepare all the food they received from the pantry (Greger et al, 2002). Furthermore, another study indicated that the provision of recipes may have been a potential measure that helped improve the diet of food pantry users (Yao, Ozier, Brasseur, Robins, Adams, & Bachar, 2013).

Not all of the food pantries that participated in this present study classified themselves as choice pantries, therefore they were non-choice pantries. In these particular pantries, pre-made bags were made for the clients, and it was commonly reported that when the bags were made, the food was grouped into meal-based options. Daponte and Bade (1999), conducted focus groups among food pantry recipients in Pennsylvania and found that providing some ingredients for a complete meal, such as spaghetti sauce and pasta encouraged clients to buy additional food items, such as meat, in order to make their meal “complete”.

### **Food Pantries are Interested in Growth and Expansion to Better Meet Client Needs**

Various administrators indicated that bringing the food pantries together in a more centralized location would have better suited the client’s needs. Food pantry clients would not have to spend a majority of their time traveling from pantry to pantry if everyone cooperatively came together. A study comparatively looked at grocery store access patterns and reported that town living offered proximity to stores and easy access to safety net institutions like senior meal sites and food pantries. However, the authors of that study argued that as towns lost grocery stores to regional trade centers, at-risk-populations may have found that living in town still did not solve food access or potential food insecurity problems. These communities would then have to face the requirement for better transportation systems that connected them to regional trade centers and safety net institutions such as food pantries (Bitto, Morton, Oakland, Sand, 2003).

Both studies showed that a better transportation system or a centralized location could have helped better meet the needs of the food insecure individuals.

The current study also discussed the importance of consistent access to refrigeration to help properly store the different foods offered. Without proper storage, several food pantries were unable to offer foods such as milk, meat, and eggs, and were unable to store varying foods in bulk for later use. An article by Story (2018) stated that for food banks, refrigeration and keeping perishable foods cold was essential to increasing access to fresh, nutritious foods for thousands of food insecure families. Though, sadly, refrigeration could have been a challenge for food banks and pantries, since refrigerators were costly to purchase, run and maintain. For small pantries, in particular, this became a huge barrier to offering nutritious perishable foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese, even if those items became available (Story, 2018).

### **Food Pantries Rely Heavily on Donated Items Distributed with Specific Guiding Principles**

In order to fulfill the needs of all the individuals in the community, most of the pantry administrators in the present study recognized how critical donations were. They reported receiving help supplying an appropriate selection of food in the form of food donations from local agencies and organizations in Delaware County. Another study reported the importance of food donations, stating that traditional food pantry programs supplied eligible households with non-prepared food items donated by retailers, manufacturers, industries, producers, churches, and community members (Simmet et al, 2017).

With a majority of different food items being donated to the food pantries, a majority of the food pantry administrators in the current study specified that they accepted all donations. As long as the items donated were in good condition, all foods were accepted as clients were

appreciative of receiving anything. In contrast to this study, a study by Campbell and colleagues (2009) found that some food pantries and food banks had begun to respond to the shifting needs of their clients. For example, in 2004 the Food Bank of Central New York adopted a “no soda, no candy” donation policy, which resulted in a substantial decrease in the amount of soda and candy accepted at the food bank (Campbell, Webb, & Crawford, 2009).

To help contribute to food safety and the prevention of foodborne illnesses, pantry administrators of the current study reported regularly checking the dates on the food, making sure they were safe to consume. Some of the administrators further indicated that if food were going bad, they would place it on a miscellaneous cart, and it would then be the client’s decision to grab the “expired” food or not. A food bank in Siouxland also explained their use of guidelines to help assess the dates on the cans, deciding if the product was still edible. When an item had an expiration date, the guidelines told them how far beyond that date the product was still usable. Baby food, for example, must have been eaten before expiration and not after. However, on the other end of the spectrum, pasta was good “several years” beyond the date (Food Bank of Siouxland, n.d.). Both studies indicated regularly looking at dates, though they both also indicated giving away some products beyond their specified dates. This was because often times the “best if used by,” “sell by,” and “use by” designations were just manufacturers’ best guesses about how long their food would taste its freshest (Ceasrine, 2018). Supermarkets may have used the dates as a guide when stocking shelves, but the dates had little to do with how safe the food was (Ceasrine, 2018).

## **Comparing Pantries**

This study identified that the size of the food pantry, the length of time the pantry administrators had been in their current position, and the pantry classification as either faith or non-faith-based influenced the administrators' managerial strategies. In two previously mentioned studies, they recognized additional variables that could further identify the differences among pantries. In the study by Duffy and colleagues (2006), they were able to identify differences in race, education, and religion when comparing the pantry directors with the food-needy populations they serve. However, when the directors were asked specifically about the food pantry clients, they responded with a mix of sympathy and suspicion. Directors were likely to serve various populations leading to a wide range of experiences and different views (Duffy et al., 2006). Additionally, Precious and colleagues (2017) were able to qualitatively observe the use of bricolage in diverse geographical food banks and food pantries located in Oregon. To overcome the pressures involved in the emergency food network and to help fulfill desired roles, pantry managers implemented various strategies, such as address verification, information sharing and the enforcement of the "once-a-month" rule. However, within the various rural/urban food banks and pantries, there appeared to be no specific pattern in which the differing size, location, or style of pantry affected the practice of bricolage (Precious et al., 2017).

## **Summary**

The sixteen total one-on-one interviews with the pantry administrators and researcher eventually led to the identification of five major themes and eighteen sub-themes that further verified the themes. Additionally, the findings of this current study showed similar findings aligned with other research. The research looking at the different managerial styles and strategies



of food pantries is lacking, which emphasized the need for further studies to increase the knowledge of food banks, community members, and other pantries.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. This chapter will present the conclusions, limitations, and provide direction for future research on the managerial styles and strategies of food pantries.

#### **Conclusions**

Food insecurity is one of the nation's leading health and nutrition issues (Gunderson & Ziliak, 2015). The overall prevalence of food insecurity is of great concern, especially in Delaware County, which has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate in the state of Indiana (Gunderson et al., 2018). Food insecurity has various determining factors, such as income, marital status, gender, race, education, and geographic location. Furthermore, food insecurity leads to an overwhelming array of physical, psychological, and health deficits, which affects one's overall wellness. To help in the fight against food insecurity, federal food and nutrition assistance programs, and emergency food providers are available. Food pantries are a part of the expansive network constituting the emergency feeding organizations. Aside from what is known about food pantries, the understanding behind the managerial practices of the food pantries is still lacking. This

information is critical for food pantry administrators, to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in alleviating food insecurity. By developing good management skills, pantry administrators have the opportunity to continue seeing success for their food pantry.

This qualitative study was designed to further identify effective management strategies used by food pantry administrators in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity in Delaware County, Indiana. Sixteen pantry administrators were recruited from the local food pantries, for a one-on-one interview with the researcher. Of the sixteen pantry administrators that were interviewed, a majority specified their position as a volunteer and permanent. Their agencies were predominantly open once a month or twice a week and no one charged their clients to access. Additionally, five themes emerged from the study. First, “there are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, and the sub-themes were: a pantry leader is under the guidance of Second Harvest, a pantry leader is empathetic, and a pantry leader values fairness. The second theme was, “there are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service entities”, and the sub-themes were: agencies rely heavily on volunteer labor, agencies identify minimal challenges in finding and maintaining volunteers, agencies briefly train pantry volunteers, and agencies spend minimal effort spreading the word regarding their services. The third theme was, “food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients”, and the sub-themes were: food pantries would like to accommodate to special dietary needs (even if they are unable), food pantries allow clients the ability to choose their own food items, food pantries provide recipes and samples for new items, and food is grouped into meal-based options. The fourth theme was, “food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs”, and the sub-themes were: food pantries would like to be centralized in location, food pantries would like to have consistent access to refrigeration, and

food pantries would like to provide more services than just food assistance. Lastly, the final theme was, “food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles”, and the sub-themes were donations are critical, all donations are accepted, the dates of items are checked regularly, and prepared foods are not accepted. Findings from this study implied that identifying the pantry administrator’s management strategies and styles, and further sharing this information may increase the knowledge of food bank administrators, community members, and other food pantry administrators, potentially helping to reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

Although there were other studies that looked at similar variables, a primary strength of this study was that it looked into the different managerial styles and strategies used at food pantries. This particular topic portrayed an array of results, that together, are lacking in current data. This study portrayed a greater understanding of pantry administrators’ attitudes, beliefs, and understandings behind running a food pantry. This information may increase the knowledge on management strategies and styles for food banks, community members, and other pantries. As a result, food pantries have the potential to be better functioning and therefore serve more community members. Which in the end, could hopefully help reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county. Another strength of the study was that out of the 23 food pantries present in Delaware County, the researcher was able to conduct an interview with 16 pantry administrators. Having a larger number of interviews provided an array of detailed transcripts. Having a plethora of transcripts provided the researcher with more quotes to choose from, which then better developed and explained the reasoning behind the decision of each theme and sub-theme. Lastly,

another strength was the methods used to obtain data. The researcher personally hand-delivered the letter of consent and letter of introduction in an envelope to the pantry administrators. While delivering the envelope, the researcher introduced herself, and also discussed the purpose of the study. A few pantry administrators verbally expressed that having the researcher hand them the envelope rather than receiving it through mail made them more willing to participate because normally they would just leave mail sitting on their desk.

There were a few limitations to this study. First, the validity and reliability of the interview questions were not adequately ensured. The researcher did a face validity of the questions with the thesis committee and conducted a practice interview with a food pantry in Indianapolis. More practice interviews would have been helpful in improving the reliability and validity of the interview questions. Secondly, one of the demographic questions resulted in multiple responses, instead of the expected single response. This could have possibly been prevented by conducting more practice interviews to fully grasp the types of responses commonly reported. Another limitation of the study was that the food pantries that opted not to participate in the study may have portrayed different characteristics from those that agreed to participate. If this was the case, then the results identified here might not be reflective of all the food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana. Unfortunately, the researcher did not have any means of verifying.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results of the present study, further research on the different managerial styles and strategies of food pantries is warranted. The following suggestions are recommended for future studies:

- Investigate the food pantry clients' perspectives of the different leadership styles used by the food pantry administrators.
- Obtain additional demographic characteristics of the food pantry administrators, such as sex, age, education, and employment status, to determine the impact the management styles of the food pantries.
- Clarify the identification of the different types of food pantries that most pantry administrators work in (governmental, non-governmental, faith-based).
- Recreate this study with an even larger sample size, outside of Delaware County, to further measure participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.
- The questionnaire should be replicated to measure the validity of the questions.
- Conduct an interview with a local food bank to further collect information regarding their side on supplying the food pantries.
- The current study is only relevant to Delaware County, Indiana. Therefore, additional studies among other counties in Indiana, as well as other states, to compare results is warranted.
- After data is presented, a follow-up survey should be conducted to see if there is an increase in the knowledge of management strategies and styles obtained for food pantries.

### **Recommendations for Future Practice**

The following recommendations have the potential to improve the efficacy and efficiency of the food pantries:

- Implement organizational networking between the different pantries to help maximize the relationships with key stakeholder groups, and to help improve arising issues or concerns.

- Implement a structured training plan for volunteers because if an organization has good training for employees, it can enhance the performance of employees, as well as the organization.
- Consider a centralized location, so that individuals do not have to spend a majority of their time traveling from pantry to pantry.
- Offer meal-based options to allow the clients to choose from a selection of meals to create, but also to supply a greater variety of nutrients.
- Obtain proper storage necessary to withhold all of the food items needed to meet the needs of the community members. Adequate refrigeration/freezer space is important if planning to store items in bulk.
- Provide samples and recipes to allow clients to taste foods they may be unfamiliar with, and to offer the clients an opportunity to explore a new dish.
- Gain knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding special dietary needs, to help answer questions community members may possibly have concerning their specific needs.

The need for accommodating dietary needs is growing and understanding the knowledge behind these needs will obtain the client's trust in the pantry.

## **Summary**

While some studies have evaluated the distribution and nutrition procedures used by food pantry operators, understanding the managerial practices of the food pantries is lacking in research. This qualitative study was designed to further identify effective management strategies used by food pantry administrators in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity in Delaware County, Indiana. Despite the limitations obtained from the one-on-one interviews with

the sixteen pantry administrators, future considerations and insight were gained for studying management practices within food pantries in the future. Drawing from this insight, future research may benefit from developing a better understanding of leadership styles, type of agencies, demographic characteristics, expanding the studies beyond Delaware County and Indiana with an even larger sample size, and determining the possible increase in knowledge obtained from the food pantries. By furthering this area of study, there will hopefully be a reduction in the prevalence of food insecure individuals in the future.



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## APPENDIX A

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD MATERIALS

A-1 IRB APPROVAL LETTER

A-2 CITI CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



## Appendix A-1 IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Integrity  
Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
2000 University Avenue  
Muncie, IN 47306-0155  
Phone: 765-285-5070

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DATE: February 25, 2018  
TO: Kylie Mennel  
FROM: Ball State University IRB  
RE: IRB protocol # 1189514-1  
TITLE: Identification of Managerial Strategies Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County, Indiana in their Effort to Alleviate Food Insecurity  
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project  
ACTION: APPROVED  
DECISION DATE: February 25, 2018  
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

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The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on February 25, 2018 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

### Exempt Categories:

	<b>Category 1:</b> Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
X	<b>Category 2:</b> Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior
	<b>Category 3:</b> Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
	<b>Category 4:</b> Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or

	if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
	<b>Category 5:</b> Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.
	<b>Category 6:</b> Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

#### Editorial Notes:

1. Exempt status: With signed consent.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

**Reminder:** Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.



D. Clark Dickin, PhD/Chair  
Institutional Review Board



Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/  
Director  
Office of Research Integrity

## Appendix A-2 – CITI Certificate of Completion

### COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

#### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\*

\* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Kylie Mennel (ID: 6034643)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Email:** kmennel@bsu.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Dietetics
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
- **Record ID:** 21861346
- **Completion Date:** 09-Jan-2017
- **Expiration Date:** 09-Jan-2020
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score\*:** 99

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	07-Jan-2017	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	07-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	07-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections (ID: 14)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	09-Jan-2017	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	09-Jan-2017	4/5 (80%)
Ball State University (ID: 13475)	09-Jan-2017	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: [www.citiprogram.org/verify/7k6c54173b-fdac-454c-80f9-ac7236f454d5-21861346](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/7k6c54173b-fdac-454c-80f9-ac7236f454d5-21861346)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)

Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)

Phone: 888-529-5929

Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\***

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Kylie Mennel (ID: 6034643)
- **Email:** krmennel@bsu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Unit:** Dietetics
  
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
  
- **Report ID:** 21861346
- **Report Date:** 13-Jan-2017
- **Current Score\*\*:** 99

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Introduction (ID: 757)	09-Jan-2017	No Quiz
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	07-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Ball State University (ID: 13475)	09-Jan-2017	No Quiz
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	07-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	07-Jan-2017	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	08-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Human Subjects Research at the VA (ID: 13)	09-Jan-2017	3/3 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
The IRB Member Module - 'What Every New IRB Member Needs to Know' (ID: 816)	09-Jan-2017	7/7 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections (ID: 14)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	09-Jan-2017	4/4 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14926)	09-Jan-2017	4/5 (80%)
Hot Topics (ID: 487)	09-Jan-2017	No Quiz
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	09-Jan-2017	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: [www.citiprogram.org/verify/2k6c54173b-fdac-454c-80f9-ac7236f454d5-21861346](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/2k6c54173b-fdac-454c-80f9-ac7236f454d5-21861346)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)  
 Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)  
 Phone: 888-529-5629  
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

## APPENDIX B

### INSTRUMENTS

## **Interview Questions**

### **Demographic-**

- Is your position a paid or volunteer position?
- How many hours per week do you work in this position?
- How often is your agency open?
- How would you describe the type of agency that you work in? (If they are silent, NGO, choice, governmental, civic, faith-based)
- Do you charge to access your agency?
  - If so, how much?
- How many food insecure individuals does your agency serve per week?
- How many years have you worked in food distribution?
- How many years have you been in this position?
- Is your position permanent or rotating?

### **Leadership-**

- What kind of training have you received?
- What attracted you to this type of work?
- In your view, what qualities does a manager in your position need to be successful in this position?
- What are some drawbacks to this position?
- Where do you see food redistribution to the impoverished heading?
- Do you think that Delaware County has unique challenges that other parts of the state do not experience?
- What would be your dream setup for your agency to be successful?
- Do you feel networked with other food redistribution agencies in the county? Why/why not.

### **Agency Organization-**

- Is your agency staffed with volunteers?
- What is the paid staff to volunteer ratio?
- Are there any challenges your agency experiences with finding and maintaining volunteers and/or paid staff?
- How does your agency recruit volunteers?
- How does your agency train volunteers?
- What decisions were made to determine how much to charge (or not to charge) patrons?

### **Public Relations-**

- What tactics does your agency use to advertise the services of your food pantry?
- How does your agency know if your approach to advertising is successful?

### **Capacity-**

- Is your agency able to fulfill all the community members needs that walk through the line?
- If your agency is not meeting the need, what would be needed to improve this fulfillment?

**Nutrition-related culture-**

- Does your agency provide community members with access to nutritious foods to meet special dietary needs?
- Has your agency ever discussed the nutrition attributes of the foods distributed? Why/why not?
- Does your agency have any written or unwritten policies/ guidelines to increase healthful foods, or decrease less healthful foods?
- Have you received any training regarding different dietary needs?
- Can you share what educational materials your agency provides to your clients that help them with preparing items that may be unknown to them, such as vegetables like plantains?

**Practices relating to food procurement-**

9. What are some requirements that your agency has for your suppliers?

- Please describe how foods are obtained?
- Does your agency reduce or ban particular food items, such as sweetened beverages?
- Describe how your agency monitors the nutritional quality of your food?

**Practices relating to food distribution-**

10. How do you decide how much, and what type of food, is distributed each day?

- Can you share how foods are determined to be safe to consume, such as foods that are stamped past the due date?
- Does your agency accept prepared foods and then redistribute to clients? If yes, can you share the procedures in place for the redistribution?

## APPENDIX C

### LETTER OF CONSENT



## Appendix C- Letter of Informed Consent

**Study Title:** Identification of Managerial Strategies and Styles Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County, Indiana in their Effort to Alleviate Food Insecurity

### **Study Purpose and Rationale**

The purpose of this study is to identify management practices specifically, leadership styles, food procurement, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in their collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. Despite the critical importance of food pantries in reducing food insecurity, few studies have evaluated the management strategies used by food pantry administrators, while concomitantly providing the food in a way that meets the disparate needs of food insecure families who frequent the pantry.

### **Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must 18 years and older, and be a pantry administrator at one of the 20 food pantries in Delaware County, Indiana.

### **Participation Procedures and Duration**

During the semi-structured interviews with pantry administrators, the researcher will seek to document information from each food pantry relating to their leadership styles, public relations campaigns, capacity, nutrition-related culture, and practices relating to special diets, food procurement, and food distribution. The interview topics will be presented in an open-ended format to allow for more flexibility and greater depth in the responses. If the pantry administrator agrees to an interview, the researcher will schedule a one-on-one interview to discuss further topics. Each interview is scheduled for an hour.

### **Audio or Video Tapes**

For purposes of accuracy, with your permission, the interviews will be audiotaped. Any names used on the audiotape will be changed to pseudonyms when the tapes are transcribed. The tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for three years and will then be erased.

### **Data Confidentiality or Anonymity**

All data will be maintained as confidential and you will not be asked to provide any identifying information. The interviews will be held in locations providing privacy.

### **Storage of Data and Data Retention Period**

The recorded interviews will be stored in a Ball State University faculty's locked office and will be erased off the recorder once data is entered. The data will also be entered into a software program and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. Only members of the

research team will have access to the data. The raw and final data will be protected via a password protected computer and flash drive and will be retained for 3 years.

### **Risks or Discomforts**

The only anticipated risk from participating in this study is that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer all of the questions and may choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

### **Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study**

Should you experience any negative feelings from participating in this study, there are counseling services available to you through Still Waters Professional Counseling, LLC in Muncie, (765) 284-0043. You will be responsible for the costs of any care that is provided. It is understood that in the unlikely event that treatment is necessary as a result of your participation in this research project, Ball State University, its agents, and employees will assume whatever responsibility is required by law.

### **Benefits**

Benefits to participating in this study may include increased knowledge of management practices, and the data obtained could potentially help other food banks and local pantries optimize their services as they aim to reduce food insecurity in their community.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions to the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

### **IRB Contact Information**

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at [irb@bsu.edu](mailto:irb@bsu.edu).

**Study Title** Identification of Managerial Strategies and Styles Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County, Indiana in their Effort to Alleviate Food Insecurity

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### **Consent**

By continuing to the *interview*, you are agreeing to participate in this research project entitled, "Identification of Managerial Strategies Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware

County, Indiana in their Effort to Alleviate Food Insecurity”. You have read the description of this project and give your consent to participate.

- ☐ I agree to participate in the interview
- ☐ I do not agree to participate in the interview

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you agree to participate in the interview, please provide your best form of contact and fill in your normal weekly availability below. The researcher will follow up with an interview time that corresponds with your availability.

Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

Please provide best way to contact regarding follow up (i.e. phone, email):

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Researcher Contact Information**

Principal Investigator:  
Kylie Mennel, Graduate Student  
Nutrition and Dietetics  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Email: [krmennel@bsu.edu](mailto:krmennel@bsu.edu)

Faculty Supervisor:  
Dr. Teresia Mbogori  
Nutrition and Dietetics  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Email: [tnmbogori@bsu.edu](mailto:tnmbogori@bsu.edu)

## APPENDIX D

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

## Appendix D- Letter of Introduction

Dear Food Pantry Administrator,

My name is Kylie Mennel. I am a graduate student in Nutrition and Dietetics at Ball State University. My passion is helping communities reduce food insecurity. For my master's thesis, I am conducting a study that focuses on identifying leadership styles, management practices specifically, leadership styles, food distribution, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana, in your collective effort to alleviate food insecurity. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

My study consists of a one-on-one interview between food pantry administrators and myself where we will talk about effective strategies you have used in your food pantry. If you agree to participate, I will contact you to identify a mutually agreeable interview time. The interview, which will last approximately one hour, will be audio recorded.

Those who participate in this study will need to complete the consent form, found in the envelope along with this letter. For completing the interview, the researcher will donate \$20 to your food pantry.

I hope you will consider participating in my study. I am happy to answer any questions you may have, at any point during the study. You can contact me, Kylie Mennel, at [krmennel@bsu.edu](mailto:krmennel@bsu.edu) or 317-797-6208. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Kylie Mennel